

## How to use this leaflet series

# 5 Ways ...

## Step 7.

The back page, titled '5 Ways,' suggests actions and insights to enrich Catholic spirituality in the home, often drawing inspiration from a Jewish saying, prayer or practice. This step, with its practical orientation, could be used as an extension of the discussion in Step 6, or it could provide the basis of a 'take-home' exercise for the group.



## Additional notes.

The steps outlined here describe the usual pattern. Occasionally, for a practical or liturgical reason, the leaflet departs from the norm.

Each leaflet is the result of the author's own Torah reflections and *havrutah* experiences, using Jewish sources and methods. It expresses a living Torah experience and its goal is to encourage other lively Torah experiences.

*Havrutah* (small group discussion) is key to the *Light of Torah* experience. Even a 'solo' reader who is not part of a Torah group should seek out at least one other person with whom to share his/her reflections during the week.

Above all, read the text! Even if you read only a few verses, read and ponder them well. God's Word is exactly that: God's Word. No commentary or bible study tool can ever substitute for the 'real thing.'

Start-up Series: Leaflet #2



# Light of Torah

*"But those who study  
the Torah give forth light  
wherever they may be.  
It is like one standing in the  
dark with a lamp in his hand"*  
(Exodus Rabbah 36,3).

## How to use the 'Light of Torah' series

*Why reflect on Torah?*

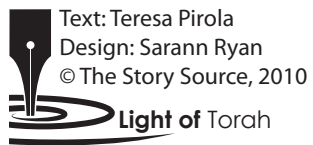
## Step 1.

A *Light of Torah* leaflet acts as a guide, leading the reader through an active process of engaging with the bible text and considering its impact on his/her life. It is not meant to be read from start to finish without pause (although one might do this as an initial orientation), but rather slowly and thoughtfully, in conversation with the sacred text and ideally with a discussion partner.

The cover page is introductory, explaining what is meant by 'Torah,' why it is important to Catholics, and how Christianity finds its historical and spiritual roots in Judaism. Although thematically repetitious (to cater for first-time readers), the cover page alters slightly each week, allowing even a regular reader to hear something 'new' each time.

*Leaders' tip:* Commence by reading this page, 'Why reflect on Torah?', inviting comments from the group. In this way you will be reflecting on *Nostra Aetate* and other church documents on which the cover page information is based.

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**Light of Torah** is a grassroots movement that encourages Catholic parish audiences to be attentive to the gift of Torah and to the gift of Judaism that gave us Jesus, the Living Torah. Reproduction of its materials permitted for non-commercial church use. More information: [lightoftorah.net](http://lightoftorah.net)

The leaflet date, issue number and Torah reference are always displayed here.



## Step 2.

### Torah Portion

This section states the weekly Torah reference (as it appears on the Jewish liturgical calendar) and offers an introductory word about the Torah portion. You will notice that the Torah portions are quite lengthy. Although we are encouraged to read the whole portion each week, it is understandable that some weeks we may only be able to read part of the portion.

#### READ THE TEXT

Having introduced the Torah portion in Step 2, now read it aloud in the group, drawing on one or more voices. If not reading the entire portion, choose a substantial section of text containing the relevant verses from Step 3. Invite initial reactions to the text.

#### How to use this leaflet series

## Tasting Torah

### Step 3.

Having listened to the reading of the Torah portion and having voiced some initial reactions to what we have heard, we now focus on a small section of the text, often just one or two verses. 'Tasting Torah' offers an observation or asks a question about the text and invites reactions from the group.

*Leaders' tip:* Don't hesitate to draw the group back to the text to read it again, or to read the surrounding verses, in order to give close attention to the comments of participants.

## Touching Torah

### Step 4.

Here we present one or more responses through the lens of Jewish interpreters. The reader is introduced to the names of people and writings from the Jewish tradition which may be unfamiliar at first. Brief footnotes and bibliographic notes help to identify commentators and sources.

*Leaders' tip:* Encourage the group to compare the responses of the sages to their own, to interact with them, to affirm or debate them.

#### How to use this leaflet series

## Depthing Torah

**Step 5.** Now we go further, either extending the previous line of enquiry or introducing an alternative interpretation of the text.

*Leaders' tip:* Continue to encourage the group's engagement with the sages' points of view. E.g., What is surprising or refreshing about this or that interpretation? Does it challenge or support you as a Catholic? Encourage people to engage creatively and personally, but discourage any tendency to 'wander off;' always bring them back to the text. 'Yes, I hear what you're saying, but how does the Torah text we have just read support your point of view?'

## Doing Torah

### Step 6.

We undertake Torah study not simply out of intellectual curiosity but for transformation of life. This section connects our Torah insights with the practical issues of Christian living.

*Leaders' tip:* Model this by sharing a practical decision or action you intend to implement in your own life. Avoid statements like: "We all should," and replace with: "This week I will..."



### Faith & Life

As part of your **Step 6** discussion, read this column. It typically offers a story to stimulate ideas about faith practice in daily life.

Then again, sometimes this space is used to incorporate an additional insight from Jewish tradition.

*Leaders' tip:*

Begin and close your Torah session with a prayer; e.g., you might base your prayer on this quote from Jewish *midrash*:

*'The Lord make His face to shine upon you...with the light of the Torah... May he enlighten your eyes and heart in the Torah... For the commandment is a lamp, and the Torah light.'*  
(Prov. 6:23)

- Numbers Rabbah 11,6