

Study Guide for The SSND Educational Story

Presented by Miriam Jansen, SSND

**A presentation and process that can be used with boards, faculties,
and / or staffs of SSND institutions and organizations**

**(The DVD can be obtained by contacting S. Grace D'Amico, SSND, NAMA Sponsorship
Coordinator at gdamico@ssnd.org.)**

Suggestions for use:

The DVD presentation is approximately 47 minutes long, and contains an introduction of Sister Miriam Jansen and a conclusion by Sister Patricia Flynn, SSND.

It is suggested that the persons conducting the meeting view the DVD in advance and select questions suitable to the organization and the participants, and considering the time available. Make up a sheet listing the questions selected with room to jot down thoughts.

Questions 1-3 relate to the entire presentation. Questions 4-12 focus on some of the themes developed by Sister Miriam, but are not meant to be exhaustive. Feel free to develop your own questions!

For a two hour meeting, it would probably be best to limit the questions to the three general questions and two thematic questions of your choosing. Other thematic questions can be used as parts of subsequent meetings or in the context of an opening prayer.

For a four hour workshop, the DVD can be viewed in three segments, and thematic questions that relate to the specific segment can be used:

Minutes 1- 16	Questions 4, 5, & 6
Minutes 16- 29	Questions 7, 8, & 9
Minutes 29-46	Questions 10, 11, & 12

The process for the meeting—viewing, reflecting, sharing in triads—can be repeated three times, with the large group sharing at the end.

Suggested process for a two hour meeting:

1. Welcome, opening prayer (10 minutes)
2. Facilitator introduces the video, explains that there will be time for reflection and discussion afterward. Have notepaper and pencils available. (5 minutes)
3. View DVD (on a TV or by computer projection) (50 minutes)

4. Distribute Reflection / Discussion sheet containing questions you have chosen.
(Leave space for people to jot down their thoughts.)
5. Personal reflection (10 minutes)
6. Sharing in triads (15 minutes)
7. Large group sharing – What participants heard or said in the triads. (20 minutes)
8. Where do we go from here? (10 minutes)

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

General Questions

1. What in the presentation made a special impression on you?
2. What did you learn that surprised you?
3. What questions have arisen for you?

Thematic questions

4. Sister Miriam says that the SSND Story “is about love, faith, and hope,” and that the SSND Spirit is like “a prism of grace...a spiritual energy that resides in us and moves us to greatness.” ***In your work in, or in behalf of [institution / organization name], how have you experienced the SSND spirit?***
5. Sister Miriam says that although it is impossible to grasp the full meaning of our SSND educational vision, “We know when we have it; we know when it is absent.” ***When you regard [institution / organization name], where do you see the SSND Educational vision present? Where does it need to be fostered?***
6. Sister Miriam states that the story of the foundation of School Sisters of Notre Dame is a story about the breakthrough of the Divine into human experience at a time of moral decline. Bishop Wittmann and Caroline Gerhardinger had a spiritual vision, i.e., that the Christian education of girls would restore family life and ultimately, German society. ***What in our age needs “a breakthrough of the Divine”? What spiritual vision does this age need? What are we called to be? What are we called to do?***
7. Mother Theresa and Father Job believed that the proclamation of the Gospel and leading people to the knowledge that God loved them were essential to their vision of education. ***To what extent do you believe these values are expressed today in [institution / organization name]? How can it be done, given our pluralistic society?***
8. In his *Spirit of the Constitution*, Father Job said “Only sound instruction and training of the heart deserve the name ‘education’” and “Christian educators can teach only out of a deep spirituality.” ***What has been your experience regarding this view of education?***

9. As she began the Congregation, Mother Theresa found that her spiritual vision that each human person is valued and loved by God was compatible with Pestalozzi's pedagogical principles. Faith and methodology created meaning in a form of education that was successful and recognized. ***What in our contemporary world can we use to make our spiritual vision real?***
10. School Sisters of Notre Dame heeded the call of Vatican II "to return to our roots, renew ourselves, and read the signs of the times." The SSND Constitution, *You Are Sent*, states, "For us, education means enabling persons to reach the fullness of their potential as individuals created in God's image, and assisting them to direct their gifts toward building the earth." (YAS 22) ***In [institution / organization name] which parts of this definition do you see fulfilled? Where is more attention needed?***
11. In recent years, the originating graces of School Sisters of Notre Dame have taken on global expression:
- "Our ministry demands a Christian vision of what the human person is called to be and what the world is destined to become." (YAS 24)
 - "Like Mother Theresa, we educate with the conviction that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons." (YAS 22)
 - "We commit ourselves to confront injustice through education that challenges and liberates." (General Chapter 1997)
- Select the quotation that speaks to you most strongly in your present situation / organization and explain why.***
12. ***As we consider the work of our ministry, the needs of the people we serve, and the condition of our world, what is one concrete thing that we can do in the next three months "to bring love and learning together?"***

The DVD was produced by Dianne Buckman, SSND, through the generosity of the Baltimore Province. The process and the questions were prepared by Grace D'Amico, SSND, NAMA Sponsorship Coordinator.

Please note: If you would like to receive this document in electronic form so that you can cut and paste the questions, please email me at gdamico@ssnd.org.