Here is a story to help illustrate the points in my previous lecture. I was fortunate to be part of a TR group for over a decade. In response to the “who” question, we were all lay Catholic women, all doing parish ministry and living in the same geographical area. This group varied between three and six participants at each session, but they were always the same individuals. We usually met in the home of one member, which had space and privacy well suited to our group. Our goals—that is, “why” we were meeting—were primarily to support one another’s ministry and deepen our spirituality, rather than to engage in a common project. The strong continuity in our participants over the years, as well our small number and home setting, allowed us to develop deep and sustained interpersonal support, as well as heartfelt love. It also provided a unity of purpose and understanding essential to the deepening of our spirituality through TR.

However, this group differed in significant ways from other groups necessary in the work of ministry. Its small size would not have been sufficient for conducting any large-scale or long-term projects. And, while in many ministerial contexts it is useful and important to gather a group of both men and women, if this group had done so, we might not have been able to bond as closely as we did. These are just a few illustrations of how the participants affected the range of obtainable goals for us.

As you study this unit and as we prepare to practice TR soon, I hope you’ll begin to contexts where you can begin to gather collaborators who can help you to meet your goals in ministry. Keep in mind that, while all TR groups have limitations, clarity about our larger vision is immensely helpful to strengthening them. In our case, that vision is centered on fostering Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.