



Anglican
Cursillo
Movement of
Australia

Lay Talk Guidelines

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The Progression of the Talks

Cursillo is primarily an instrument for bringing the good news of Christ into all levels of human society, to transform it from within. The approach used by Cursillo is one of changing environments by changing individuals. Cursillo aims to achieve this through enabling Christians, so that supported by other Christians they bring change through 'friendship witness'. The main thrust of the Cursillo method is in what follows the Three Days, living out the Christian faith, with the support of friends, through Group Reunion, Ultreyas and spiritual direction.

The Three Day Weekend is the introduction to the Cursillo method. It shows how Christians can live life more fully with the support of others. Within the weekend the Christian Community of the team and their friendship provide a strong witness to how effective the method can be.

One of the two aims of the Cursillo weekend, to introduce those taking part to a living experience of Christian community, can be fulfilled as the team build a sense of community during the training period, then open it up to those sharing the Three Days with them.

The other aim of the weekend is to give them a vision, and encourage them to accept it, of what is basic for being a Christian, *being a saint*, and of what it means to make Christ present within their own worlds, *being an apostle*. In other words it should give a vision of what their own lives can be. The weekend talks are the means to achieve this second goal.

This means it is important for team members to consider the talks and understand what they are expected to achieve. The talks are not just a series of separate messages, but each one is part of a whole. It helps to think of them as presenting a single talk made up of segments, each related to the others and each with a specific purpose. This means that for the weekend to be fully effective each must be written to achieve that purpose.

Since the talks are inter-dependent and integrated it is important to understand how they all fit together. They need to be considered both individually, with their specific messages, and as a whole. There are different ways of doing this because they are brilliantly crafted to inter-relate in a number of ways.

One obvious way to analyse the talks is to consider them as

those presenting a theology of living a life of grace. *Grace, Faith, Sacraments, Obstacles to Grace and Christian Living*, and

those which give practical witness to the ideal of living a life of grace. *Ideal, Laity, Piety, Study, Action, Leaders, Environments, Christian Community and Fourth Day*.

Another way is to realize that the talks go through three phases in presenting their vision. Each phase is distinct and aims to do something different. The first phase shows what we can be, the second explores what we can do, and the third explains a method which assists us in our action to change our world for Christ.

The introductory talk by the lay leader on the first evening, which welcomes the new Cursillistas, explains the basics of Cursillo and the weekend, and calls for their commitment to it, is part of a **time of preparation**, which also includes the Spiritual

Retreat. In the Retreat the participants are brought before God in a dramatic and powerful way which reminds them of their need to belong and respond to him.

The first meditation in the Retreat, *Know yourself*, focuses on self-examination. It is an invitation to look in deep honesty at who one is, at one's attitude to Christ, and at the possibility of change.

Following *The Way of the Cross*, the meditation *The Prodigal Son/The Merciful Father* brings hope into any anxieties that may have been raised by the earlier meditation. In it the attention is on God as the loving Father, eagerly waiting for any sign of the return of his wayward child.

The silence of the Retreat is to allow these messages to be thought through, and to prepare the way for what follows.

At the morning service the next day *The Three Glances of Christ* sets the tone for the day's talks. It calls us to see ourselves through the eyes of Christ. This meditation should help listeners to see his look as one of love, infinitely beyond that of any ordinary person, but also it shows that we can accept or reject that love. It concludes the time of preparation.

The First Phase. The proclamation of the message starts with *Ideal* and ends with *Faith*. Talks in this phase are low-key, simply presenting Christian living as an achievable ideal. They should present what is fundamental to being a Christian, giving oneself to God and the work of bringing others to him, in a very joyful, simple and authentic manner. The message of this phase is accept the Christian ideal.

First Talk - *Ideal* – The human perspective

Following the call of the meditations to consider our own lives, *Ideal* asks the question 'What does it mean to be fully human?' Without specifically religious or Christian content, it shows that we all shape our lives by some ideal, and seeks to awaken a desire for a high ideal, to provide meaning to life.

Second talk - *Grace* - God's perspective

Grace is a call to become a fully Christian human being. It presents the central idea of Cursillo, the life lived in close personal relationship with God, Father, Son and Spirit, made possible by God's grace towards us. The life of grace is shown as the foundation for authentic Christianity, and this talk is the foundation on which the remaining talks are built.

Third talk - *Laity* – Church perspective

This talk shows that to live in grace involves being living, active members of the Church, fulfilling our baptismal calling by sharing God's grace with those around us. How this is to be done is covered in later talks.

Fourth Talk – *Faith* – Accepting the vision

Faith is really the second half of the *Grace* talk. It presents the human side to God's grace – our response to God's offer. It assures us that if we respond, God will enable us to share both in his life and in his plan for salvation. It introduces *palanca* as prayer, the

supporting faith of others, the evidence of a loving prayerful community involved in the weekend.

It is intended that the first phase leaves the participants with the questions ‘How do I become holy?’ ‘How do I live the life of grace?’ ‘How do I achieve the ideal which has been set before me?’

The Second Phase. The development of Christian life answers these questions, explaining that they involve drawing closer to Christ. It focuses at an individual and personal level. The talks present the need for a constantly growing commitment to God and his plans, to make the Christian ideal a part of our lives, a continuing conversion. This phase gives patiently explained, practical ways to live a life of grace, knowing Jesus as a person, following him and seeking to be like him. We are formed as Christians, becoming Christian leaders, as we develop our relationship with Christ through piety, study and action.

Fifth talk – *Piety* – Sharing in the vision

Piety is about our ongoing practical, personal response to the message proclaimed. It gives strong witness to the fact that it is possible to live a life in close friendship with God. To pursue holiness is our response to God’s call, which gives us the desire to direct our whole lives to him. It discusses briefly ways to do this, with the living testimony of the speaker showing that what is spoken of can be lived.

The morning of the second day opens with the meditation *The Figure of Christ*. It brings Christ before the listener as present here and now, perfectly human and perfectly divine, the model for our lives and leadership. It should help us see Jesus as God within reach, knowing our problems from the inside and able to help us overcome them.

Sixth talk – *Study* – Informing the vision

This talk inspires us to align our thinking with God’s. It asks us to seek a dynamic knowledge which can help us understand more about our loving God and ourselves, and to use that knowledge so that every area of our life becomes more deeply Christian. It presents a wide range of sources for our continuing growth in the life of grace.

Seventh talk – *Sacraments* – Nurturing the Vision

Originally given as one talk but now timetabled as two talks.

The *Sacraments* talk continues the focus on a personal encounter with Christ, the vertical dimension of Christian living, as well as pointing to the horizontal dimension of being in Christian community, where again he is to be found. The sacraments sustain and deepen our relationship with Christ.

Eighth talk – *Apostolic Action* – Applying the Vision

Apostolic Action completes the tripod of our response to God, telling us that we are sent to bring God’s love to those we encounter daily. It presents the method of reaching out through apostolic friendship – ‘Make a friend, be a friend, bring your friend to Christ’. The body of Christ builds itself up through love.

Ninth talk – *Obstacles to Grace* – Sustaining the Vision

This talk shows how to overcome the things which would draw us away from the life lived in grace. It presents realistically the problem of sin, and focuses on the practical

remedies God provides, prayer, reconciliation, discipline, spiritual direction and Christian friendship.

Tenth talk – *Leaders* – Owning the Vision

This talk forms a bridge between the things we need to do as a Christian and the way we can bring change to our world. It presents the Christian leader as one who, through Piety, Study and Action, becomes an effective Christian in the world, influencing others to draw closer to Christ. With the witness of the speaker, it aims to inspire the candidates to realize that being such a leader is within their reach.

The Third Phase. Insertion - being effective in bringing Christ into our world covers the final day. It explains the Cursillo strategy of transforming the environment by means of Christian communities. This final phase considers the enormous task of changing society, and shows that it is possible to achieve this by dividing the task into affecting small environments. The emphasis moves from the development of the individual Christian to the strength gained from being part of Christian community. The talks are practical and confident in tone.

The morning's meditation *Christ's Message to the Cursillista* picks up on the call to be a leader and prepares for the talks of the day. It presents Christ's call to his followers to bear fruit, emphasizing that the foundation for this work is their relationship to Christ and other Christians. It contains both challenge and reassurance.

Eleventh talk - Studying and Changing of the environments – Employing the Vision

The first talk of the day responds to the challenge. It encourages participants to examine the groups to which they belong in society, and to bring Christ's influence to the people within them. It is a call to change the quality of involvement the participant already has, rather than a call to become more involved.

Twelfth talk – *Christian living* – Empowering the Vision

Christian Living provides a practical program for spiritual growth, to back the call to action. The main emphasis is on prayer in its personal and corporate aspects. Spiritual direction is among other aids covered.

Following the talk the Spiritual Adviser explains the Commitment cards, which have been distributed, and encourages participants to review their commitment to a program of piety, study and action.

Thirteenth talk – *Christian Community in Action* – Growing the Vision

This talk emphasises the need to be part of a community of like-minded people for greater effectiveness in changing the world for Christ. In any environment the primary concern should be to form a community in which Christians can share the life of grace, so that others are attracted to follow Christ also.

Fourteenth talk – *Fourth Day* – Living the Vision

The *Fourth Day* talk is concerned with maintaining what has been achieved on the weekend. It presents Group Reunion and Ultreya as the means to help us persevere in our efforts, and is reinforced by the speaker's witness to the value of these means to persevere. As with the *Sacraments* talk, there is some value in presenting this as two talks, Group Reunion and Ultreya, so that each is fully dealt with.

The above explanation considers the roles of the talks as a line running through the weekend. It is more accurate to think of them as each part of a grid, as the line that runs across the days is equally important in understanding the progression of the talks. There is a repeating pattern of talks which move from the intellect to the will to the heart.

Ideal, Study and Environments, at the start of each calendar day, appeal to the mind. They encourage a rational and intellectual response to the message.

Laity, Action and Christian Community appeal to the will. They encourage the practical response of outreach to the call from God.

Piety, Leaders and Fourth Day appeal to the heart. They encourage a desire to carry out the message because of love. Also as the final talks of each day and the weekend they lock in place the talks that have gone before them.

Within the weekend, each talk dovetails into the next, overlapping and yet unfolding a fresh aspect of the message. Each speaker has a role to play in creating this pattern, through keeping their own talk true to its purpose. Each talk is a link in the chain contributing to the whole message of the weekend. This parallels the developing community spirit of the Three Days.

Structure of Cursillo

Segments	First Day	Second Day	Third Day
Direction Evening	The Retreat Meditations Know Yourself The Way of the Cross The Prodigal Son Silence	Piety We <i>can</i> live the life of grace – one person’s witness	Leaders With Piety, Study and Action the well-formed Christian shows others the way to Christ
Meditations Morning	The Three Glances What has been our response?	The Figure of Christ Human – he understands; divine he saves	Christ’s Message Do great things – they <i>are</i> possible!
Foundation	Ideal The call to be fully human	Study Seeking to know God and what God requires of us	Environments Study and plan how best to bring Christ to life situations
Spiritual Orientation	Grace The best ideal-living the life of grace	Sacraments Encounters with God which make full life possible	Christian Living Some practices of piety are essential. Emphasis on prayer
Role in the World	Laity Active responsible members of Christ’s body	Apostolic Action Reach out to others with the love of Jesus	Community We cannot go it alone. Community give us courage and direction
Underpinning	Faith Our response to God	Obstacles to Grace Be prepared for difficulties. God is there to help	Fourth Day Cursillo’s support for living the life of grace

The Concept

1. The Three Day Cursillo Weekend has these elements which form the core of the weekend and maintain its integrity.
2. This table is based on the Jewish day so that the evening is to be thought of as the beginning of the day.
3. The *Retreat* and the *Piety* and *Leaders* talks set the direction for each day’s talks and are the last official activity for the day.
 - i. The Retreat: time to start thinking about our lives in relation to the living God
 - ii. Piety: our relationship with God
 - iii. Leaders: living out that relationship in the world
4. The talks deal with the practical approach to being a Christian in the world by giving us a Foundation for living, a Spiritual Orientation - a way of living it out, our Role in the World, and Underpinning - something to strengthen us for the task.

IDEAL

The Human Perspective

General Comments

The initial talks of the weekend, beginning with *Ideal* and concluding with *Faith*, present the life of grace as the Christian ideal. This talk is the first step in explaining the Christian ideal of being saints and apostles, and leaders in renewing the world for Christ. It does not have a specifically religious tone, but it should prepare participants to be taken forward during the rest of the Cursillo in exploring the Christian ideal.

Place within the weekend's talks

Ideal is the opening talk, laying the foundation for the weekend. It follows the Retreat, which urges participants to consider their lives in the light of Christ. This talk gives them a way to do so. It should help them find their own answers to questions raised by the Retreat. With its final question, it should also help listeners to understand in the *Grace* talk how their ideal fits with the Christian ideal of the life of grace. The following talks, from *Piety* to *Action* show how to make this ideal part of their lives, while the remaining talks show how to spread the Christian ideal effectively.

Aim

To show that the ideal we hold determines how we live, that we need a worthwhile ideal to be fully human, and that there is a way to discover our own ideal.

Specific objectives

- To consider what a human is and what is involved in becoming fully human
- To explain that, by virtue of our nature, we possess an ideal.
- To define what an ideal is.
- To emphasize the importance of an ideal in our lives.
- To explain that our ideal can be changed
- To suggest that we may not have recognised our true ideal.
- To question, 'What is your ideal?' and provide a formula for finding the answer.

Presentation

The talk should be presented in a warm, friendly, confident manner. It should be presented clearly and carefully with practical examples and illustrations, inviting the candidates to listen and to think. Presentation should not be over-dramatic or merely theoretical in nature. It should be low-key with examples used from the speaker's own life; it should not be emotive. At the end the speaker should leave unobtrusively.

Atmosphere for the talk

At this stage of the weekend, some of the candidates may be nervous and disoriented, unsure of what is coming and conscious of being among strangers. Generally there will be a sense of anticipation.

During the following discussion as they get to know each other the group should start to relax.

OUTLINE

Introduction

The retreat period, especially the meditation, has urged 'Know yourself'. This leads to the question, 'What is your motivation for living?'

More than merely animals

How is our motivation for living different from other creatures?

As humans we act from a complex base.

We have emotions - feelings which influence our responses
intellect - the ability to reason
freedom - to choose between options, including moral choices
will - to commit to decisions we have made

The potential and limitations of being human

We can look and move beyond ourselves.

We are spiritual beings with the capacity to transform our lives through our use of emotion, intellect, freedom and will. Within them we seek for meaning and purpose in life. We are responsible for our choices.

- Using our abilities well enables us to develop more fully
- Poor understanding of our abilities can stop us reaching our full potential as humans, for example, we can become 'too spiritually minded to be any earthly use' or too materialistic to look beyond ourselves.
- At worst we run the risk of becoming inhuman.

What limits or enables us in becoming fully human?

- Our response to evil, injustice and unhappiness in the world.
- The use to which we put our emotions, intellect, freedom and will.
- Keeping our desire for self-fulfillment from becoming self-centred.
- Setting achievable goals to realize our enormous potential and working toward them.

How do we assess our human development?

The highest ideal is love, i.e. the giving of ourselves.

How willing are we to give of ourselves, and how completely?

To whom or to what do we give ourselves? -

- Self
- Things
- Ideas
- Others

Does the focus of our life limit or extend the meaning of our life?

Becoming fully human

Becoming fully human is a process. It involves setting worthwhile goals we strongly believe in and working to achieve them.

Our goals affect the way we live. At the centre of our goals is our ideal.

What is an Ideal?

We all have one: it is the central focus of our life.

Around it revolve our actions, hopes, dreams, desires and choices.

It has two aspects: Vision – the summing up of our ideas, aspirations and preferences

Motivation – the force that moves us to obtain our vision.

Both vision and motivation are essential for us to live up to our ideal.

Our ideal in life can change with maturity, life circumstances, etc.

The authentic ideal

The quality of a person's life is determined by their ideal.

An ideal can be either authentic or false.

A false ideal does not help us grow – it discourages and disheartens.

It can prevent us trying for a new and perhaps authentic ideal.

An authentic ideal

- provides purpose and meaning to life
- is attainable
- leads to growth and maturity
- fulfils present and future needs
- motivates us to overcome obstacles
- inspires us to give of ourselves
- enables us to act from conviction
- gives hope and joy in the face of the reality of life – we become 'in love' with life

We can identify an ideal in terms of its subject, personal, family, national or universal.

As well, goals such as wealth, knowledge, glory, beauty, peace, justice, fun, etc can point us to our personal ideal.

Knowing our Ideal

It is possible to have an apparent ideal, that is what we *like* to believe motivates us, as well as our real ideal, what *in fact* motivates us.

We need to know our ideal. It is the guiding point of our life.

To discover your ideal, look to see where your thoughts, your free time, your money and your energy go. **That is your ideal.**

GRACE

God's perspective

General Comments

The *Ideal* talk states that all humans follow an ideal. The *Grace* talk presents the life of grace as the ultimate ideal. Grace is shown to be God's undeserved favour in offering us salvation, and the life of grace is presented as God's gift to humankind, the most valuable possession a person can have. The talk explains that this life is a relationship with God, and emphasises the benefits of such a life. *Grace* identifies God's invitation to a relationship, and should show how we can respond to that invitation.

The speaker's personal witness of their own response to the call of Christ forms an essential part of this talk.

Place in the weekend's talks

The second talk on the first day, the *Grace* talk is the basis for the rest of the Cursillo weekend. It presents the key to fulfilment for each person, and for the world. The *Grace* talk builds on *Ideal*, in showing the life of grace as the true ideal. *Grace*, *Laity* and *Faith* complement each other in showing what is fundamental to being a Christian – faithful commitment to God and to his plans for the world. The later talks all build on this understanding.

Aim

To explain what grace is and show the life of grace as the ultimate ideal, so that those listening understand the importance of being in a living relationship with God.

Specific objectives

- To explain what is meant by grace
- To show the importance of adopting the ideal of living a life of grace
- To encourage listeners to move deeper in their relationship with God
- To share simple testimony of the speaker's experience of grace.

Presentation

Since the ideas in this talk are the basis on which the rest of the weekend rests, they need to be presented very clearly. Some of the listeners may not have considered the meaning of grace and will need to have the concept carefully explained, in a talk which keeps firmly to the central message of God's invitation to a living relationship with him. At the same time the talk should not appear to be a sermon or lecture, but an informative, interesting, intimate and friendly chat. The speaker's simple, honest comments on their own response to God's invitation to a life of grace should be a witness to God's love and the response of an ordinary person. The listeners should be told clearly what a great thing they are called to be part of.

A number of Bible references are basic to the talk. It is not necessary to use all those given as they are intended to provide firm ground for the speaker for this key talk. The references could be given as a hand-out.

The speaker should point out that the Bible, especially the New Testament, is the sourcebook for the weekend.

Atmosphere

This talk is presented with a clear message of God's call to go deeper, but without confrontation, and with a straightforward personal witness. The tone of the talk is reassuring.

OUTLINE

Introduction

The *Ideal* talk gave an invitation to be fully human. To achieve that fullness, God's call to us is to be not simply human, but Christian humans.

The Old Testament shows the history of God's dealings with his people – repeated invitations into a mutual relationship of love with him. The prophets, especially, urged the unfaithful people back into genuine relationship with God (e.g. Isaiah 55).

Jesus began his ministry by calling people in the same way. (Mark 1:15)

The good news he shares is that God continually invites us to deepen our relationship with him.

The invitation to a new relationship with God

In calling us, God

- seeks us because of his love, not because of anything we have done.
- loves us as we are (1 John 4:10; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:4)
- promises to be with us in our lives.(John 14:23; Matthew 28:20)
- gives himself and so gives us love- since he IS love (1 John 4:8). He gives us life (John 14:6) and the ability to live for him.

We speak of all this as God's 'grace'.

Often we seek something from God (e.g. the Samaritan woman John 4:15).

What he offers us is Someone, a life-giving personal relationship.

God is always reaching out to us, seeking to share his life with us.

He does this because of his unconditional love.

His love demands our free response.

We choose to accept or reject or ignore his love.

What he asks is that we trust our lives to his love, and respond to him with love. (John 3:16)

A complete response

Entering into a love relationship with God our Father involves us as whole people (Mark 12:30).

- Our intellect faith is reasonable
- Our emotions faith involves our feelings, though it is not dependent on them.
- Our will most important. Our choice is free and personal.

What happens if we accept?

- God comes into our life (John 1:11-12)
- Through this we receive life in its spiritual abundance (John 10:10).
- We are a new creation, ready to become the people God intended us to be. (2 Cor. 5:17)

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- God begins a progressive transformation of our whole lives, as we become increasingly like Christ. (2 Cor 3:18)

This transformation is called ‘conversion’.

- For some it begins with a dramatic event.
- For most, it is more an awakening or unfolding.
- For all it is the beginning of a lifelong process of giving more and more of oneself to God.

This is only possible through God’s grace, as Jesus indicated in his conversation with Nicodemus. (John 3:1-21)

The gift of Grace

Grace is God’s love at work

- preparing the way for us to turn to him in faith. (Ephesians 1:4-6)
- providing for our forgiveness. (John 3:16; Luke 23:34)
- promising not to condemn us, we are accepted. (John 4; John 8:1-11)
- offering to fulfil all our needs. (John 4:14)
- transforming our human nature as Christ lives in us. (Gal 2:20-21) He loves us as we are, but too much to leave us that way.

It is the life of God, a love relationship, freely shared with us, to be accepted freely by us through faith. God gives, in his mercy, what we do not deserve and what we can never earn. Through it we too can accept and forgive others, finding healing in our lives.

Like any gift, its value to us comes as we accept it.

Personal Testimony

The speaker should share something of his/her own growth in relationship with God, emphasising that it is still a work in progress.

A verse such as Matt 6:33 would be a suitable conclusion.

Membership of God’s family

This section dealing with relationships is to be treated briefly – it is an introduction to what will be expanded in the following talks and meditations.

Our relationship with God also involves our other relationships.

Because we share life with God, we are related personally to each member of the Trinity

- Sons and daughters of the Father
- Brothers and sisters of Jesus
- Friends of the Holy Spirit

We are also related personally to all other members of God’s family, and in Christ we can be made whole in our relationships with our family and friends, workmates and the world at large.

The good news is that the grace of God provides the strength for working through all our problems.

Conclusion

During the rest of the weekend we will be learning how to live more effectively as members of God’s family.

Jesus says, 'Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and eat with you, and you with me.' (Rev 3:20)

It is an invitation made to all.
It is for us today.
Will we accept his invitation?

LAITY

A church perspective

The term *laity* actually refers to the whole people of God – every Christian – all of whom have an apostolic calling as the result of baptism. However, in this talk it is used to refer to those who do not have the specific function of bishop, priest or deacon.

General comments

The talk speaks of the world's problems, pointing to Christ and his grace as the solution. It shows the listeners that as part of that solution they are called to be Christian in the world, to draw others to Christ and his church by the witness of their lives and words.

The emphasis is not on the church or being a layperson, but on the apostolic ideal for lay people - their calling to be 'church' and take the church's mission to the world.

It is directed mainly to the mind and the will, presenting the reason for apostolic action, and asking for acceptance of that mission.

It is not intended to encourage people just to do 'church things' but to be 'Church in the world', bringing Christ's love into the everyday life of their communities. It emphasises the ministry and mission of the church in society at large, and presents our responsibility to be active members of the people of God, offering our lives and witness to God's plan to transform the world.

We are to be the hands, ears and eyes of Christ for the world.

Place in the weekend's talks

Laity is the third talk of the first day. It starts to show how the Christian ideal presented in *Ideal* and *Grace* can be effective in changing the world, and provides the framework for the rest of the lay talks. It introduces the concept of lay action – our calling to be Christ's witnesses in the world. This leads into *Piety*, *Study*, *Apostolic Action*, *Leaders* and *Christian Living*, as forerunners to all that is involved in the 'action' talks.

Aim

To convince listeners that as Christians they carry the mission of the church to change the world for Christ.

Specific Objectives

- To show that the world's problems are caused by a lack of response to God, and their solution lies in a return to God.
- To explain that the mission of the Church is to evangelize, bringing people to Christ, who changes values.
- To explain that Christ is calling us to join this mission, and that our living the life of grace opens the way for transformation of our world.
- To assure participants that they are not alone, but that they work within, and are supported by, the church community, the Body of Christ.

Presentation

As with the other early talks, the approach should be low-key. There should not be an urging to any specific action, but a presenting of ideas which may be new. Because this is a general introduction it should not go into the detail which will be developed in later talks. This is not a bare-the-soul talk but should use examples and stories from the

speaker's or others' lives to illustrate the ideas. Using an illustration of group action is the most suitable.

The speaker may need to enlarge the listeners' view of the church beyond that of a safe haven for Christians, to that of a lighthouse showing the way.

Aim for clarity, naturalness and conviction, with a light touch. It should not be a heavy talk, but simple and sincere.

Atmosphere

At this stage the atmosphere is still very much that of the head rather than the heart. Discussion is still at the level of the exchange of ideas, and the dynamics of the group are still forming. Most are joining in, though it is likely some are still holding back.

While *Ideal* tends to disturb the listeners, *Grace* should have calmed them. *Laity* is likely to challenge them once more, but should do so at a general level.

OUTLINE

Introduction

The *Ideal* talk asks what we are living for.

The *Grace* talk introduces a new ideal – the new life God offers us.

This talk links the ideal of living in grace to the whole of human life – the world.

In the world there are problems, the greatest being that people are not living as God's family.

God's plan for the world

- There are many problems in our world. *Give examples of current problems, avoiding controversial ones*
- Human attempts to solve them are failing. *Examples*
- These problems are caused by separation from God.
- God's plan of salvation is worked out both at a personal level and at a community level –
 - The vertical relationship – God and sinner reconciled.
 - The horizontal relationship – person to person reconciled.
 - All people living in grace – not in isolation, but in community.

The Church is

- the people of God (Gal 3:26) not the buildings.
- the body of Christ, alive and real. (1 Cor 12: 27)
- the immediate, visible and natural fruit of evangelism.
- salt, light and leaven for the world, sharing the gift s/he has received, the carrier of hope and God's love (Matt 5:13 – 14; 1 Cor 5:6).

The mission of the church

- To continue the mission of Jesus himself, to bring the Good News to all people, the evangelisation of the world.
- The church exists primarily for those outside itself (Matt 28:19-20) and to nurture and equip its community as they live out that mission.
- Each member of the Church needs to catch this vision of mission.

- We are called and sent, as our response to what God has given us, and for the sake of the world. (John 15:16)
- All orders of ministry, laity, deacons, priest and bishops, are responsible for this common mission from Christ, though there are differences of function.

The Layperson's mission

The Layperson's mission is in the world and for the world.

Lay people are accepted readily in non-Church society. They may be accepted more naturally than clergy by non-Christians. Many opportunities arise for mission in personal encounters and friendships.

It is through lay people that the ordinary non-Christian can come into contact with Christ, seeing and hearing what the Christian message is, as Christians make the Good News come alive, by who they are.

Lay mission is...

- Personal becoming more Christ-like
- Communal working as part of the body of Christ (Eph 4:15-16)
- A reaching out engaging with the wider communion
- A work of grace God's life and love in all situations
- Apostolic sharing and living the Good News in every situation in which we are.

Conclusion

Ordinary lay people like us became effective evangelisers, making person to person contacts, as the early church grew. They knew Christ's presence, his power and his love in their lives, and they lived it and told others of it.

We have the same calling – to BE Christians, living in grace and by grace – a joy to God and a joy and witness to others.

Christ is counting on us.

FAITH

Shaping the vision

General Notes

This talk flows out of the *Grace* talk. It emphasises the human aspect of grace: faith is the response of the individual to God's grace. Faith is shown as a dynamic action (rather than a set of beliefs) which is possible for all, and within which God enables us to reach our potential. The talk reveals the true nature of faith as OUR choice - made possible by God's aid and power - and as the forerunner to growth as Christians. This raises the essential question, 'You CAN trust God: WILL you do so?'

The talk should prompt listeners to reflect on how much they themselves have made a conscious response of faith to God.

The talk concludes by introducing *palanca* as a sign of the faith of others for the present participants. The emphasis in this must be that 'palanca' refers first of all to the support of prayer and self-sacrifice, and only afterwards to letters and other expressions of prayerful love.

Place in the weekend's talks

As the fourth talk of the first day, it is a key to the day's call to give oneself to God and the work of bringing others to him. The morning's talks have presented the life of grace as the Christian ideal, lived in the context of a faith community which has a mission to reach out to others. The *Faith* talk's re-assurance that such a life is possible to everyone lays the foundation for the later talks, which develop aspects of that life and how it can be lived.

Aim

To provide a joyful conviction that it is possible to live a life of grace by responding wholeheartedly to God, through the Holy Spirit.

Specific objectives

- To show that God gives us a choice to accept or reject his grace.
- To point to faith as the key which we need to open our lives to God's gift of grace.
- To define faith as saying 'yes' to God's gift of himself and actively trusting God's grace.
- To put to rest any doubts and fears of inadequacy about living the Christian ideal.
- To explain the role of the Holy Spirit in enabling us to live the life of grace.
- To introduce *palanca* as a sign of the faith of others assisting those present.

Presentation

Although this is a profound talk, it should not sound heavy, but optimistic – a lively, confident, insightful talk. The emphasis is on God's enabling, not on difficulties. The aim is to counter the response, 'That's fine, but I certainly can't do it', with the assurance that should WE choose, God WILL enable us to overcome these difficulties and realise the ideal that has been offered. Some witness to this from the speaker's own experience will be helpful. The link to the *Grace* talk needs to be made very clear, reminding listeners that God acts first in reaching out to us in Christ, and will act again if we choose to put our faith in him. The talk should leave clear in the listeners' minds that we have a choice which God respects.

Atmosphere

The morning's talks may have challenged the listeners. Some may be tempted to avoid the challenge by dwelling on personal weaknesses and limitations. This talk should renew the challenge but also reassure and encourage the listeners. The introduction of palanca is a further re-assurance, providing an experience of what it is like to be part of a grace-filled community, and should have considerable impact.

OUTLINE

Introduction

The morning's talks have presented a call from God.

- to be fully human, with an ideal big enough to motivate our whole lives.
- to be fully Christian, living a life of grace in close relationship with God.
- to be active apostles, bringing Christ into our worlds.

This is a great call, involving our whole life. It can seem too great a challenge for us.

It is primarily a call to reconciliation and friendship with God. (2 Cor 5:19)

God makes the first move (John 15:16) but he has given us free will. We can accept or reject his ongoing call. He stands at the door and knocks, waiting for our response. (Rev 3:20)

How we respond will affect us, and all those around us. There are two choices for our life, recognizing that Scripture tells us:

‘Without me you can do nothing.’ (John 15:5)

and

‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’ (Phil 4:13)

Left to ourselves, by our own efforts we would fail because

- our nature inclines us to serve our own interests. (Romans 8:5)
- in the face of obstacles we would give up or give in. (John 6:60,66)
- we cannot always judge what is good as when Paul persecuted the early Christians, thinking this was serving God. (Acts 9:1-2)

However, every Christian has unlimited access to the transforming power of God's grace, received through faith (Eph 2:8)

Faith – definition

There are many misunderstandings about faith. People say ‘I wish I had more faith.’ But faith is less something we have than something we do.

- Faith is possible for everyone. (John 7:37)
- Faith is active. On those occasions when people came to Jesus for healing he saw their coming and asking for help as faith.
- Faith is trusting God unreservedly, all the way, with all that we are.
- Faith is saying ‘Yes’ to God wholeheartedly.
- Faith is not primarily intellectual beliefs or strong convictions.

Faith – the key to the life of grace.

When we are open to him in faith, God is able to work in our lives.

By faith:

- we show our trust in God and his purposes. (Hebrews 11:8,10)
- we discover God's directions and wisdom for our lives.(John 14:26)
- we are sustained through failures, frustrations and disappointments. (Romans 5:1-5)
- God enables us to have fruitful lives. (John 15:5)

Grace and Faith

Grace and faith are closely related.

- Grace tells us that God's power is always present.
- As we respond with faith, God's grace becomes effective to us as individuals.
- Faith opens us to God's presence. The more open we are, the more we can recognise God's grace in our lives.
- Faith accepts that God's grace is guaranteed to us by the death and resurrection of Christ.

The Holy Spirit works through our faith.

Jesus knew his disciples would feel anxiety and have needs. He promised to be with them always (Matt 18:20) and to send them another Comforter, the Holy Spirit. (John14:16-17) This promise is for us too. (John 17:20)

The Holy Spirit has a particular role in developing our faith.

The Spirit

- leads us into greater love for God (John 14:15-17)
- prompts us to offer ourselves more fully to God and his plans. (Romans 12:1-2)
- prays with us and for us (Romans 8:26-27)
- gives us new values and helps us see our lives in a different light (Romans 8:5)
- strengthens us for Christian living and sustains us in the trials of life (Eph 3:14-19)

Filled with the Spirit

We are sealed with the Spirit at baptism. The Spirit becomes more active in our lives as

- we desire to be filled
- we are willing to be led
- we die to self
- we entrust ourselves fully to him in a wonderful relationship

Faith at work

God offers us so much. We need to be available for all he wants to give us and do through us.

We make ourselves available to God

- through **prayer** that relies on God's sufficiency. (Matt 7:7-8)
- through **conscious faith** that trusts God for the impossible. (Matt 17:20)
- through **action** that translates our faith into deeds. (James 2:17)
- through **confidence** that leaves the results to God. (as in the parable of the Sower)

Conclusion

This Cursillo weekend is an example of people seeking to work with the Holy Spirit in faith. It is a great opportunity to draw closer to God.

Those of us who are responsible for this Cursillo are seeking to live out our faith, trusting God for the outcome. We would not take part if we did not know that we would be supported in prayer by our Christian community.

Many people have been and still are praying for you, without necessarily knowing you. They are praying for all of us here. We believe prayer is vital for the weekend.

In Cursillo, this prayer for others is called 'palanca' – a Spanish word which means 'a lever'.

Explain that in some cases written greetings are sent to assure us of the palanca of prayer. After this assurance of the prayer support of a world-wide community share some of the written 'group palanca'.

We pray that you accept with complete confidence and faith God's offer of friendship, and experience the joy of a relationship with him and your fellow Christians – to benefit yourself, and all those you are linked with.

PIETY

Sharing the vision

General Comments

Piety refers to the Christian response to the gift of God's grace – living all of life for God. Piety is presented as the expression of our love for God and for our neighbour.

Having talked about false piety, ways we avoid a full response to God, the talk gives a picture through the personal witness of the speaker of what it means to be Christian, responding to God and growing in holiness.

The *Piety* talk also speaks in general terms of practices of piety e.g. prayer which help us develop a personal relationship with God. The *Christian Living* talk, in particular, will expand on these.

This talk appeals mostly to the heart. Its impact comes from the reality of the speaker's witness to a growing relationship with God, in the attempt to live a life in grace. It should bring the new Cursillistas to a point where they realize that this Christian ideal is both necessary and possible.

Place in the weekend's talks

Piety is a key talk in the Cursillo weekend. It ends the low-key approach of the largely-theoretical talks of the first day, by presenting the challenge to live the Christian ideal fully and unreservedly. It shows the personal and practical response of the individual to God's call, and takes the first step in presenting the message that we are 'sent' into the world.

The picture is only broadly drawn at this stage. All the later talks build on this presentation, explaining in greater depth the different aspects of living the Christian life more fully.

On another level, the *Piety* talk presents the first leg of the Cursillo tripod of Piety, Study and Apostolic Action. In Cursillo the tripod represents the balance of dedicating all aspects of life to God. Piety - growing in the life of grace through a deeper relationship with God - is the starting point for this, preparing the way for the *Study* and *Action* talks.

Aim

To show that piety speaks of a growing relationship with God, which leads to a life of grace that is totally possible for the ordinary Christian.

Specific Objectives

- To dispel false ideas of piety
- To show what genuine piety means in a person's life.
- To show that growth in piety results in a life of grace, the Christian ideal.
- To show, through personal witness, that it is possible to live this life.
- To introduce the concept of the Cursillo tripod of Piety, Study and Action
- To encourage the listeners to come to grips with the on-going need to deepen their own relationship with God

Presentation

The talk should be simple, direct and forceful, showing what a true relationship with God is like. In this way it should cause listeners to assess the level of their own response to God, and see that this touches every aspect of their lives. At the same time its picture of the speaker's attempt to live the life of grace should be warm and attractive.

The talk has three major sections:

- A definition of piety, emphasising that we must *be* Christian, not just do Christian things.
- A short section about false piety – this involves dispelling false concepts, not condemning false people. It should not be over-stressed but simply clears the way for...
- A description of true piety, which moves to a deeper personal witness of living the Christian life today, including some of the practical helps to growing in holiness. These will be developed in later talks.

The personal witness should emphasise the on-going process of developing a relationship with God. The changes described need not be dramatic – for many there is a gradual awakening, perhaps with several significant points of change. What is important is to be open and authentic.

The speaker should suggest that directing their life to God has made a positive and significant difference. The talk should conclude with an invitation to 'come and see' the values of such a life.

Atmosphere

By now the participants feel called to respond to the message but they may still have doubts about how this will work out in their lives. This talk aims to show, through witness from the speaker's life, that the message is not just theory.

For many, coming after the *Faith* talk and the surprise of the palanca letters, the witness and warmth of this talk will be a turning point in their acceptance of the message of the weekend.

OUTLINE

Introduction

Today we have been challenged to respond to the call to be human – *Ideal*, to be Christian – *Grace*, and to be an active member of the church -[Laity.]

God calls us to a new life which

- involves BEING Christian (responding to God's love) rather than simply DOING Christian things (responding to an external set of guidelines)
- changes us and brings new relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and the world.
- can be expressed in three ways, touching the whole of our life
 - Piety
 - Study
 - Action

This is the most appropriate point to introduce the concept of the Cursillo tripod, explaining that Piety is one of the three supports which give a firm foundation for the Christian life. All three are vital.

Study and Action will be the subjects of later talks.

In this talk we will consider Piety

Definition

Piety is the continuing direction of our whole life to God. In it our ideal becomes to live our life for God. Piety expresses our love for God and for our neighbours. (1 John 4:19-21)

What Piety is not - those false perceptions of being pious!

- Being concerned about appearing holy, rather than seeking the reality.(Mark 7:6-8)
- Acting as ‘Sunday only’ Christians, with a faith that is not lived out in everyday life.
- Following routines of faith from a sense of duty or fear.
- Cutting ourselves off from the world, rather than bringing Christ *into* it.
- Setting standards (especially for others!) which we do not attempt to keep.(Matt 23:2-4)
- Being self-satisfied.

These and other types of false piety tend to turn others away from God, rather than attracting people to Christ.

True Piety

- Grows out of our personal relationship with God. (1 John 4:7)
- Relies on God’s grace for help to grow.(Phil 2:12-13)
- Is an awareness of Christ living in us – conscious, growing, and shared with love. (Gal 2:20)
- Is the source of our Christian action, rather than its result - as we grow closer to God we move out towards others.
- Lets God direct our knowing (head), our wanting (heart) and our doing (hands).
- Is being Christian in our everyday life - family, work, social life, and caring for God’s world.
- Is natural and vibrant, sometimes courageous.

‘Practices’ of Piety

Within our piety there are things we do to nourish our Christian life. Among these are:

- Prayer
- Bible reading and meditation
- Worship
- Fellowship with other Christians
- Submission to God’s will. (Luke 22:42)

Conclusion

A life of real piety brings joy to us and to others, which grows as we share with others. We want them to have the best that we have – Christ himself.

Christ offers us this abundant life as a free gift. How can we refuse?

STUDY

Discovering the vision

General comments

The talks of the first day presented the life of grace as the Christian ideal. Those of the second day expand on this, seeking to answer the question, 'How can I live this ideal of the life of grace?'

The *Study* talk emphasises study as part of this answer, and as a daily life-changing discipline. As an essential part of our being formed as Christians, and so becoming conformed to God's plan of seeking to transform our worlds with Christ's love, we need to be better informed. This talk presents study not as learning about Christianity but as providing the understanding to help us live as Christians. Study goes far beyond reading books: it refers to everything in life that helps increase our understanding of God and his purposes for us and our love for him. Because this is a basic change from what the listeners may expect, this point will need to be repeated in different ways within the talk.

Place in the weekend's talks

Study is the first talk of the second day, which has started with the meditation *The Figure of Christ* presenting Jesus as God and man, the perfect revelation of God's love. *Study* encourages the listeners to know him better and imitate him. This talk presents the second leg of the tripod, and should show *Study* in relation to *Piety* and *Action* - as the outcome of *Piety*, and the fore-runner and director of *Action*. *Study* strengthens our *Ideal* and arms us to defend the life of Grace. A further aspect of study is covered in the talk *Changing the Environments*.

Aim

To emphasise that study is an essential element in our continuing development as Christians, and to present study as the constant search for God's revelation in our lives, so that we can live within his purposes.

Specific objectives

- To show study as part of our ongoing transformation, linked to Piety and Action.
- To point to Christ as the principle source of study, encouraging listeners to see the hand of God in all around them.
- To make listeners realise their need be more fully formed as Christians through study.
- To explain Christian study as a daily process, and much more than reading books.
- To reassure listeners that study is natural and achievable for all Christians.
- To explain ways in which they can study.
- To show that it is possible to overcome obstacles to study

Presentation

Like the other talks of this day, this is an explanatory talk, not simply presenting what should be done, but explaining how to do it. It is not an intellectual talk it is a call to listeners to let themselves be changed through Christian study. The style should be clear, objective, and well illustrated with examples or explanations from the speaker's own experience. Study should be presented as a means, not an end. The focus of the talk is

primarily at the individual and personal level. Examples given should deal with the individual Christian and his/her relationship with Christ and others.

It should motivate the listeners by showing the value of study for their own lives and the lives of others.

Atmosphere

At this time the new Cursillistas will probably have mixed feelings. Some will be enthusiastic and others will be cautious. Some will be wanting to learn how they can know God better and how to grow in their faith.

Hopefully they will have slept better and will be refreshed. Many will be expecting to move forward and are hopeful. This talk is part of helping them find answers to any questions which may be forming.

OUTLINE

Introduction

Link back to the *Ideal* talk. It showed that an authentic ideal gives meaning and purpose to life.

An authentic ideal involves our hearts in desiring, and our wills in pursuing, but our minds in understanding and knowing how best to follow it.

Living a Christian life fulfils all the criteria for an authentic ideal but it also involves our commitment to Christ.

Study

Our nature as humans involves us in reflecting on life and its meaning.

In day to day living we all study in one way or another.

In practical learning – for a career or hobby interest, to run a business or a home

In seeking to understand people – for relationships at work or at home or socially

In interpreting issues that face us in the world – information from a variety of media

Study involves much more than reading books or doing classes. It is learning through all the facets of life, gathering insights and information, to enable us to respond to life better. Conversation, multi-media, so called secular books and magazines may enrich us.

Christian Study

This is a part of living the Christian life. To live as Christians we must understand what that means. Christian study is quite different from academic study. We are seeking wisdom, rather than mere facts about life. To do this does not require great intellect, but commitment; it is open to everyone.

Definition

Christian study can be defined as applying our minds to learn the truth.

It is the process of learning to know God more closely, seeking out what he has revealed to us about himself, so that we respond with heart, mind and soul to his love.

The necessity for study

Study is not an option. It is part of the commitment we make to God in response to his love.

It is necessary

- to allow us to reach our God-given potential.
- to enable us to enter fully into the relationship God offers us with himself
- to help us understand God's plans for the world

We need to be open to the truth he reveals to us.

A childhood level of knowledge will not sustain us as adults. (Hebrews 5:11-14)

Objectives of study

Christian study is not an end in itself, but a means to draw us closer to the heart and mind of God.

As we mature in our understanding of God and his plans for us and for the world, we can better live the Christian ideal.

In this way, study is an extension of piety constantly helping us to become more like Christ. It is also a fore-runner to our action. This is the subject of a later talk.

Method of Study

The right attitude for study

- Making it our goal to put on the mind of Christ. (Romans 12:2)
- Believing that God can guide anyone, whatever their ability, into deeper understanding. (Phil 4:13)
- Seeing Christian study as more than an intellectual pursuit.
- Seeking to understand God in all areas of life.
- Surrounding our study with prayer, relying on the Holy Spirit to guide us into wisdom. (John 14:26)
- Being disciplined in study to form good study habits.

Areas for study

God reveals himself

- In creation (Romans 1:19-20)
- In the Bible – the written Word – the foundation on which we build our attitudes and personality. (2 Timothy 3:15-17)
- In Christ – the living Word. (John 14:7) We are called to meet Christ in the Bible, in prayer and meditation, in the world, in others and in ourselves.

We can also discern his will in

- The signs of the times, the media, the arts, the events of our world, and the experiences of our own lives, seen in the light of his love and wisdom.
- Conventional areas of study, books, especially the Bible, courses, etc. We need to be careful in our choices, guided by what will do most for our progressive transformation.

Problems and solutions

We need to beware of 'the paralysis of analysis' where study does not change us. What we learn is to be translated into our living.

We may be tempted to ignore the call to study by

- Pride, thinking we already know enough (1 Corinth 8:2)
- False humility, thinking we are not capable.
- Fear, concern that we may open ourselves to doubts
- Indifference, not seeing study as part of our Christian calling
- Wrong priorities, not giving time to study

We may need to check the motivation linked to our ideal. Is it really to live in God's will?

Humility, trust in God, courage and discipline will enable us to overcome the temptation not to study.

Conclusion

The call to study asks us to join a life-time journey of growth and learning, reaching toward our created potential as we daily become friends of God.

Are you sharing in this adventure?

'The speaker should be careful not to suggest specific books other than the Scriptures. The best direction is to advise the listeners to consult with their Spiritual Director regarding the best books to begin their program of study,' The Three Days p.158

APOSTOLIC ACTION

Applying the vision

General comments

This talk, in the middle of the weekend, completes the tripod of Piety, Study and Action, and explains the place of Action in the Christian life. Action arises from Piety and Study. It flows naturally out of our love for Christ. For effective action and to have a story to share, we must grow closer to God ourselves. The talk centres on Christian love, and should motivate the listeners to share Christ with others.

In explaining what *Apostolic Action* is, the talk distinguishes between ‘doing good things’ and action aimed at drawing others to Christ by sharing God’s love that is building the kingdom of God and renewing the world.

The talk does not cover all Christian action, or present a plan of action - it describes a *specific approach* to action. The accent is on making friends with others and showing them God’s love, so that they too will wish to become friends of Christ. In this way, they will be enabled to reach their full potential, and help change the world for Christ.

Place in the weekend’s talks

The talk is an important part of the second day’s explanation of how to grow and become a Christian leader, and prepares listeners for the talks which follow. As we live the Christian ideal of the life of grace, *Grace* and *Faith*, growing closer to God, *Piety* and *Study*, and are strengthened by the sacraments, *Sacraments*, Christian action is the natural and essential outcome. The talk builds on *Laity*’s picture of the Christian’s apostolic mission, while the approach to action it presents is expanded in the talks on *Changing the Environment* and *Christian Community*.

Aim

To encourage the listeners to work with others to draw them to Christ and build God’s kingdom.

Specific objectives

- To explain that Apostolic Action brings the ideals of Christ into our surroundings.
- To emphasise the importance of Christian friendship as a key to bringing our world to Christ.
- To show that this is the natural result of Piety and Study.
- To clarify that Apostolic Action involves giving of ourselves so that others can see Christ in us.

Presentation

The talk should be presented clearly and with conviction. It is a talk that depends on the will and which invites a response. It is a witness talk, and it should present the call to action as a joy, a natural aspect of being a Christian. The aim is to encourage rather than to challenge or confront. It should contain examples of sharing Christ with others, from the speaker’s own life or from others. It is best to keep these simple and straightforward, to encourage the listeners to conclude, ‘I could do that.’

Above all, it is a talk on expressing God’s love through our relationships with others, and this should come through clearly.

Atmosphere

Coming after the full morning, participants may be tired. The call to a deeper relationship with God has been presented. The *Apostolic Action* talk should encourage them, by showing an approach which can be used by Christians to share Christ with others.

OUTLINE

Introduction

The Cursillo method presents three elements in living as a Christian: Piety, Study and Action.

Piety - giving our lives to God. It empowers us to love, and inspires others to do the same.

Study - helps us take on God's perspective.

Action: the natural outcome of being Christian - loving God and others.

Christian maturity is marked by balance and harmony in these three areas, just as human maturity shows balance in the different aspects of our life - the psychological, intellectual, spiritual and social areas.

Christianity is central to the whole of life

Our relationships are on two planes:

- The vertical relationship with God
- The horizontal relationship with those around us. This is summed up in God's question to Cain 'What have you done with your brother?' (Gen 4:8-10)

We are called to respond through action relating both vertically and horizontally (Mark 12: 30 – 31)

What is Apostolic Action?

Is it simply doing 'good things' and being involved in Christian activities?

Apostolic action goes beyond these to do 'God's things' for others. Apostolic action has an aspect of 'seeking out'. It is a response to God. It is an expression and result of our love for God. God calls us to be active in seeking ways of reaching those to whom we are sent. (2 Cor 5: 18 -19) Just as he did through Abraham and Moses, God still works through people.

False Ideas of Apostolic Action

It is NOT:

- limited to 'appropriate' surroundings – church or a civic organization.
- done only when we 'feel like it' or can be in the spotlight.
- an optional extra in the Christian life. (James 2:17)
- simply behaving well. (Eph 2:10)
- manipulating others, in the guise of helping them.

True apostolic action

- is intentional, seeking to draw others to God.
- springs from our love of God.
- is more than showing affection, expressing emotion, or giving gifts.

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- expresses love (1 Cor 13). It involves having the attitude of Christ to others. (John 15:12, John 13:35)
- treats others as unique individuals.
- is a measure of our human and spiritual development.

Our apostolic action brings God's love to our world, helping it to change. It flows out of two encounters. The first encounter is with Christ and the second is with others. Action is self-giving, not self-centred and it sees others as unique individuals.

Acting apostolically involves

- God's power, speaking to God about people before speaking to people about God!
- Prayer.
- reason and balance, being well thought out. (Col 4:5)
- perseverance, not being swayed by current emotion. (1 Cor 13:7)
- expressing love, being full of the joy of the Lord.
- our lives, following God's will among the people he has put around us.

The method of action

Make a friend - take the first step yourself.

Be a friend - take time to let the friendship grow. Be interested, listen, be authentic.

Bring your friend to Christ - let Christ be part of the friendship, as your life gives witness to what you say.

So our friends can come to Christ, our action therefore is for Christ, with Christ, like Christ and in Christ.

Conclusion

Being Christian means living what we believe. Unless it is lived, the good news is only good advice – but if we really live as Christians we will be able to give a positive answer when God asks,

‘What have *you* done with your brothers and sisters?’

LEADERS

Owning the vision

General comments

Cursillo encourages people to be leaders for Christ, effective in renewing their environments by leading others to him. This talk deals with the nature of Christian leaders and the call to be leaders for Christ, not the practicalities of leadership.

A Christian leader is someone who has understood the message of God's grace, has come to know Christ well and is trying to follow him. Because they live in a growing relationship with God, Christian leaders will try to lead others to do the same.

The talk contains witness from the life of the speaker and others, perhaps including famous people. However it is important to emphasise that Christian leaders do not necessarily have outstanding natural leadership qualities. The leader is not necessarily the person 'up front', in the limelight. They are people who have learned and cultivated certain attitudes which we can all develop. A Christian leader is, essentially, one who influences others towards Christ. The qualities of Christian leadership can be developed. This talk is a call to do so.

The speaker also needs to show the balance between reliance on our selves and reliance upon God. Ignatius Loyola described Christian leaders as those who 'pray as though everything depends upon God and act as though everything depends upon us.'

The danger in this talk is to be too idealistic, and not to share the struggles of being a leader.

Place in the Weekend's Talks

This talk sums up the talks of the second day. In outlining the nature of a Christian leader, it appeals to the heart. Like the *Piety* talk, it is a call to a relationship with God – it says 'You can do this, it works'. It calls the hearers to become effective as Christians, sharing and fulfilling God's plan for transforming the world.

A natural objection of participants may be 'I'm not a leader.' The speaker needs to emphasise that we all have a role in changing the world. In Christ, through Christ, with Christ, for Christ, we are all responsible for transforming our environments. Becoming a Christian leader requires a readiness to say 'Yes' to God. It takes dedication and effort, but every one of us can do it.

The *Leaders* talk introduces concepts which will be discussed more fully in *Changing the Environments*. The *Leaders* talk shows that the listener can change their own environments. After this talk, listeners should more confident about being Christian leaders.

Aim

Participants should be left in no doubt that they can be Christian leaders, that is, effective apostles, through relying on God.

Specific Objectives

To explain what a Christian leader means within Cursillo.

To convince participants that:

All are Christian leaders within their own environments.

Leadership can be developed by respect and love.

We each have a part to play in changing the world.

We need to place our talents at God's service.

Presentation

The talk aims to reassure and remove anxiety. It is vital that the speaker not only indicates that s/he is a leader, but more importantly, shows by example how the participants themselves can be leaders. Stories used to illustrate should be simple, so people can relate to them and recognise ways of being a leader in their own circumstances. Even mistakes in life can be used as examples of growth. Each person must be able to see his/her place in the plan of God. In other words, we are all called to be Christian Leaders.

Atmosphere

Hopefully, at this stage the atmosphere is one of expectation and joy. Many will have been drawn closer to God and will be starting to think how they can live out the principles of Piety, Study and Action. Their anticipation will have been encouraged by the *Obstacles to Grace* talk. They will be wondering whether they really can make changes in their worlds. *Leaders* will reassure them that it is possible to live as a Christian in the world. Those still struggling to draw closer to Christ will be reassured that a Christian is a real person, struggling and growing, becoming more fully human and alive. *Leaders* should be reassuring to all – an exciting and stimulating talk.

OUTLINE

Introduction

Tomorrow we go back to the places and situations we came from, places and situations that God wants transformed.

We will do so with a different understanding of God's plans for these places, and how our gifts and talents can be used by God in this. We are called to act as Christian leaders in these places.

Definition of a Christian leader

A Christian leader

is empowered by Christ's love

is fully committed to serving others

has his/her life and actions centred on Christ

is part of God's plan for transforming society

We do not have to have position, wealth or great talent. Others will be influenced by the actions, opinions, decisions and attitudes of a Christ-centred life.

The qualities of a Christian leader

As we strive to live the Christian life, leadership qualities need to be developed.

The qualities a Christian leader demonstrates include:

- Authenticity- being honest with ourselves, true to our gifts, living what we say,
- Generosity – giving ourselves totally,
- A spirit of initiative – to reach our decisions under God and act on them, in co-operation with others,
- A sense of responsibility for the mission we are on,
- The willingness to risk – including risking making a mistake (John 16:31-32), accepting that we can learn through apparent failure,
- Prayerfully waiting before acting, rather than rushing into action.

These ‘natural’ qualities can only be used effectively to serve God to the extent that they are centred in Christ and combined with the following Spiritual qualities.

- A living faith – a personal relationship with God through Christ, calling us toward a complete commitment, which is reflected in our daily life.
- Hope – the door between the impossible and the possible grows out of our knowledge that God is with us (Matt 28:20) and has called us to serve others.(John 13:14-15)
- Love – motivates all other virtues, gives value to all our service, and imitates Christ. It is new every day, forgives yesterday’s hurts, and works to bring new life to the world. (1 Cor 13)
- Humility – thinking less about ourselves and more about God’s greatness and others’ unique worth and roles, recognizing God as the source of our gifts. (Phil 2:3; 1 Cor 15:9-10)

The effective Christian Leader

- Combines natural leadership qualities with Spirit-given ones.
- Responds to God’s call for his/her life.
- Relies on God, using all s/he has been given. (2 Cor 4:7)
- Accepts the message of the gospel, and seeks to call others to Christ (Rom 1:16, Eph 4:1-3)
- Is involved in the world, accepting the responsibility to bring Christ’s love, compassion and wisdom to it by joyful self-giving
- Seeks to encourage Christian community – the group is more than the sum of its parts, in what it can achieve.

ME a Leader?

- All of us already have influence in our family/work and other areas.
- God has given each of us our own place to influence.
- Christ can provide all that is needed if we work with him. ‘Christ and I are an overwhelming majority.’ (1 John 5:5)
- No one can do everything, but we can all do something. (Luke 19: 12-26)

As Christian leaders we are to use our talents – few or many, live out our Christian calling, serve others. God strengthens us as we exercise Christian leadership. (Phil 4:13, 1John 5: 4)

Conclusion

When a group of Christians moved by Christian love

offer what they have

are guided by the Holy Spirit

witness to Christ in joyful service

radiate Christ's love to those around them

then as Jesus said 'you will see – and do – greater things than these.' (John 1:50; John 14:12)

CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT

Using the vision

General comments

This was the first talk developed within Cursillo. It is a crucial talk in presenting the philosophy of Cursillo as a movement of the church. Cursillo is about more than the renewal of the church: it aims to help transform society. This talk should inspire listeners to follow a personal mission, within the church's mission, to make a difference in their world. The Cursillistas' attitude to the world should be characterised by an openness to others and awareness that they cannot expect to change everything alone.

It is not asking its listeners to take on anything new, but to change the quality of the involvement they already have. *Changing the environments* refers primarily to changing the ideas and attitudes of the people within existing social groups, through drawing them to Christ. The key to change is Christians radiating Christ's life to those around them, through loving relationships.

Place in the Weekend's talks

The third day's talks present the Cursillo method. They set out a path for participants to follow, and explain the support available for their life and work for Christ. If these ideas are not taken in, the weekend will not achieve its full purpose.

This talk begins the final phase of the weekend, preparing the new Cursillistas for their return to their environments. It is the practical application of the *Leaders* talk. It draws attention to the different places within which Christians may work for change. It responds to the earlier talks and the morning's meditation *Christ's message to the Cursillista* by showing that having a deeper their relationship with God helps a person change their environments for him. It introduces the idea that this is most effective where there is a group of Christians involved.

Aim

- To impress on participants the need to be active for Christ in all their environments, social, work, recreation etc.
- To answer the question, 'How can I transform my environments for Christ?' And show how this can best be achieved.

Specific objectives

- To explain that this talk refers to all the environments in which each of the participants moves.
- To show that effective action needs to be preceded by an assessment of the situation, and a method to change the atmosphere of the environment.
- To present basic processes and attitudes for studying and changing environments.
- To cause the listeners to feel the need to link with other Christians in this work.
- To stress that transforming an environment requires our work on three areas at the same time – ourselves, other individuals and the group.

Presentation

This is a call to arms and should be given with the conviction that what is asked is possible. Presentation should be strong, clear and systematic, laying out a method to be used. The tone should be optimistic and confident. Examples should be simple. Witnessing should be practical and based on experience, showing successful transformations, to encourage listeners to think, 'I could do that!' as they face the call to change their environments for Christ.

Atmosphere

By this stage of the weekend, most of the new Cursillistas are keen to move forward for Christ, but they may be unsure how best to do it. They may also be apprehensive as to how this will be received by those they will be returning to.

They may be tired and it is important to hold their attention.

This talk should reassure them that they can act by following the method presented and continuing to search for a closer relationship with Christ.

OUTLINE

Introduction

We have been called to grow in piety, study and action, and to be leaders for Christ. Our growth as Christians must not be only in and for ourselves. Jesus calls us to join him in changing the world that surrounds us, bringing it to him. (Matt 28:19)

The talks today show how Cursillo can help us in this.

Community

Christianity is a community, created for us to work together as the body of Christ. (1 Cor 12:27) We must do this within the world, being salt, light and yeast to change it from within.

Environment

We each live within a number of groups of people e.g. family, work and social groups. Each group has its own culture – the 'environment' of the group. It is created by the personalities in the group and the ideas and behaviour they accept.

Our environment will affect us. Consider the differences between our responses in the workplace and in our family. Are our attitudes the same at work and at church? People with ideals and drive can change their environment. As Christians, to bring change for God, we need to influence our environments more than they influence us. We need to weed out what is harmful and replace it with good.

How can we transform our environments?

Studying the environment

First we need to understand the environment.

- Its spirit - what is it like and what creates it?
- What are the ideals held within it and what effect are they having?
- How much are we being influenced by it?

Which people in it have most influence? These are the leaders.

Which people copy others? These are the followers.

Which people fluctuate in their responses? These are the impulsive ones.

Changing the environment

- requires prayer. Speak to God about people before speaking to people about God. (John 14:12-13)
- involves building loving relationships. This is missing in most environments. Make a friend, be a friend and bring that friend to God.
- is a gradual and on-going process, as we change and inspire others to change. Show first, tell when people are ready, respond to God-given opportunities.
- involves respect for others in showing the way, not forcing issues.
- is easier when we involve other Christians, especially those within the environment.

This means working on three fronts at the same time. First we need to work on ourselves, deepening our relationship with God. This involves our hearts - attitudes of love and hope, minds - understanding what we are doing, wills - deliberately moving forward with a determination to bring change. (Romans 12:1-2)

Second we work on our friends. Winning their hearts through living Christ's love will open their minds to consider Christ and what the Christian life offers and their wills to respond to God's call. (1 Cor 9:20-22)

Thirdly we work on our environment. Being **salt**, bringing the flavour of joy and happiness to the environment, being **light** introducing Christian ideals and **yeast** raising the spirit of the environment (Matt 5:13-15; 1 Cor 5:6)

Conclusion

Tomorrow we return to the places we left behind a few days ago. They will be the same – but we have been challenged by the Holy Spirit and may have been changed through the environment of this weekend.

We can help change the environments where God has placed us, as we grow in the knowledge and love of God and are supported by other Christians. We are to bloom where we are planted.

Can Christ count on us?

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Empowering the vision

General Comments

This talk provides help for living out the vision that has been presented over the weekend. It should be very practical, giving listeners a clear programme to follow for spiritual growth. The emphasis is on prayer, within worship, personally and in groups. The inclusion of the speaker's personal experience is an integral part of this talk. The candidates should be left in no doubt that what is said is possible and is being done. The Commitment Cards are distributed in conjunction with this talk, though the talk deals directly only with the Piety section of the card. However the Spiritual Advisor will explain that a commitment should be made in the three areas of Piety, Study and Action.

Place in the weekend's talks

This is the second talk of the final day. In the first talk *Changing the Environments*, the new Cursillistas have been given a stirring call to be agents of change for Christ, within their own settings. Along with the remaining talks, *Christian Living* presents a practical program of support available so they can answer the call. Here the emphasis is on ways to build a deeper relationship with God, for its own sake and to strengthen them for action. This talk builds particularly on the *Grace, Piety and Sacraments* talks, and the link between this talk and the *Grace* talk should be made clear. The programme of Christian living presented provides for the life of grace, and also expresses it.

Aim

To show practical ways in which the Cursillistas can maintain and strengthen their relationship with God.

Specific objectives

- To emphasize the need for progressively deepening our relationship with God.
- To explain that this involves a life centred on Christ.
- To encourage commitment to a pattern of worship, prayer and other keys to Christian living.
- To suggest ways participants may strengthen their prayer life.
- To assure them, through the speaker's own testimony, that this works in practice.

Presentation

This talk should cover all the points as set out but should not come across as formal instruction but as the speaker's personal testimony to what is being presented. It should be given as confident insights into how to use what has been found to work. The practical suggestions offered should be set out clearly and with the assurance that God makes what is suggested possible.

Atmosphere

At this stage of the weekend, participants may be wondering how they can live up to the picture of a Christian leader which they have been given. Tiredness may also be a problem for many of them, though they are probably lifted by the experience of the Mananita. The practical steps offered by this talk, supported by the speaker's personal witness, should capture their interest and reassure them, heightening their wish to follow what has been suggested. Filling in the Commitment Cards after the talk provides a

down-to-earth way for them to make a commitment, to provide an anchor as they move forward.

OUTLINE

Introduction

Briefly look back at the main themes of the weekend's message, especially

Grace – as God's self-giving

Faith – as our response to him, and the importance of

Piety, study and action in maintaining the life of grace

We have been challenged to change our environments with the gospel of Jesus. To do this we ourselves need to be constantly drawing closer to Christ.

He has told us 'Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.' (John 15:5)

We must live in Christ, constantly moving from being self-centred to being Christ-centred. (Gal 2:20)

Jesus, Saviour and Lord

We need Jesus as Saviour and Lord to have a full relationship with God. Christian living grows out of this continually developing relationship.

Jesus provides all that we need.

- Love. His love frees us to live lives of love. (1 John 4:7-9)
- Pardon. His unconditional love provides for our salvation. (Romans 5:8)
- Purpose. Seeking the kingdom is the most important thing we can do. (Matt 6:33)
- Power. We will not be challenged beyond his strength in us. (Phil 4:13)
- Peace. We are not taken out of difficulty, but held, within it. (John 14:27)

Jesus also provides us with a pattern for living - our way forward (John 14:6)

We will be tempted to look for easier ways. There are none.

We need to take Jesus as our

Way -Action: serving God and others.

Truth -Study: learning more about God.

Life -Piety: building a loving relationship with God.

Food for the journey

God has provided ways to sustain us as we follow Christ.

Corporate Worship

Worshipping God together is an obligation as Christians – we are called to community, as Christ called his disciples.

- It provides mutual support.
- It helps us hear and understand God's word.
- It is a witness to the world at large.

The Eucharist is the model for all our communion with God.

- We join with Christ and his offering, made once for all.
- We express our thanks and praise.
- We receive forgiveness and new strength.
- We offer ourselves to him. (Rom 12:1)

Personal prayer

Prayer - communion with God - should be prominent in our lives as it was for Jesus.

Praying leads to this communion.

Prayer is much more than 'talking to God'. It involves being honest with God and recognising what our real feelings are. It also involves being open to God's speaking in our lives and waiting for God to meet us through the Holy Spirit. Some might call this 'wasting time with God'.

To grow a deeper relationship with God, we need to spend regular dedicated private time with him. There are many aspects of praying such as adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication. There are also many approaches to praying. The following, the four P's, may be helpful.

- i. **P**assage of Scripture – springboard and sounding-board for our prayer life
- ii. **P**lace – where you can be alone and undisturbed (Mark 1:35)
- iii. **P**osture – relaxed and peaceful
- iv. **P**resence of God – trust God's promise for this, not your feelings. Be aware of his presence (John 14:23)

The Prayer Book provides many resources for personal prayer.

Remember that God goes with us when we leave our prayer time. (Matt 28:20)

Spiritual Direction – Guidance on the way

Christ is our true guide, but we can be helped in our daily lives by a Spiritual Director.

This is someone wise in spiritual matters, not necessarily a priest, whom we can trust to guide us. A spiritual director is not a problem solver or security blanket, but will help us be honest with ourselves, and to discern God's will through prayer and scripture.

Confession

We will fall short but God has provided the solution for this. (1 John 1:9)

- o Personal: privately between ourselves and God
- o Corporate: within worship services
- o Individual Reconciliation: The prayer-book service of 'Reconciliation of a penitent'. 'All can, some should, none must'.

Meditating the Word

Giving attention to God's word, so that we may be challenged to become more Christ-like (2 Timothy 3:16) Waiting upon God (Isaiah 40:31)

Conclusion

The call to live for Christ is the biggest challenge we will ever face. We need to plan and work for continued growth, using the tools God has given. This is a life of self-denial, of growing in grace and of service for the King of Kings. But in his company it is also the most wonderful life available. It is a life of love.

COMMITMENT CARDS ARE TO BE DISTRIBUTED HERE. Their use and purpose will be explained by a Spiritual Advisor.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION

Growing the vision

General Comments

Cursillo presents the message that Christianity is not just personal but communal. We are Christians, and therefore community. This goes against the pattern of our society, with its emphasis on individualism. This talk and the Fourth Day talk emphasise the essentially communal nature of being Christians. In the Cursillo sense community refers to Christians linking together, to grow together in Christian life, and work effectively in transforming the world.

The aim of Christian communities must be to change their environments. In the Christian Community talk the Cursillista learns that a group of Christians working together can accomplish much more for God than an individual working alone. It is the group which transforms society, by making Christ present.

It should be pointed out, for example, that the team for the weekend formed a Christian community in order to welcome others into that community. The primary concern of the Cursillista in any environment is to form a group to seek ways to love, and share the Christian life more intensely so that this life attracts others to following Christ.

Place in the weekend's talks

This is the second last talk of the weekend. It builds on all the earlier talks with their call to be fully Christian, seeking to bring others to live in God's grace. The first two days dealt with finding and forming Christian leaders. *Changing the Environments* has spoken of our role in transforming our existing groups. *Christian Community* presents the concept of linking those who are becoming Christian leaders so they can encourage, support and help each other in this mission. It emphasises the additional power of unified apostolic action, and leads on to the *Fourth Day* talk, with its explanation of the Cursillo method to form and maintain such community.

Aim

To take listeners from seeing themselves as individual Christians to a view of themselves as part of a small closely-knit group, part of the church's larger evangelising community, which supports them in living in ways that bring others to Christ.

To prepare them for the *Fourth Day* talk.

Specific objectives

- To show what is meant by the concept of a Christian Community in action.
- To emphasise the need for such communities, and show their characteristics.
- To point out the strength that comes from community, rather than individual striving toward apostolic action.
- To explain how such a Christian community can be formed.
- To show that Christian community must by nature be apostolic.
- To encourage listeners to honour their baptismal calling by becoming part of such an on-going small group.

Atmosphere

There may be a range of thought among the group as they consider living out the ideal that is being presented. Many will be keen to share with family and friends at home the ideas they have found in the weekend. The *Christian Living* talk will have shown them that a deepening relationship with God is a source of strength in living the Christian ideal in the secular world. This talk must move participants to an understanding of the importance of being in community.

Presentation

This is very much a witness talk. It needs to be reinforced by actual 'before and after' witness of the transforming impact of a small Christian community. The Cursillistas are being shown how to use a successful approach. This talk presents examples of successful action not simply theory. It should be presented with complete assurance, without hesitation or doubt in its message, with the witness giving credibility to the talk. There should be the same positive note as in the morning's meditation: 'This is possible because God wills it!' The talks of the third day should be the most confident in tone of the weekend.

OUTLINE

Introduction

Start where the new Cursillistas are. You are to ask, 'Why are you here?'

God's call came to you from within a community of Christians. Someone in the Cursillo community, responding to their baptismal call to be part of community in action, invited you.

The diocesan Cursillo community has supported you in prayer and loving service as you came into the smaller community created by the team. From this, the community of the weekend has been created, with the same awareness of grace, the friendship and sense of mission held by the Cursillo community.

This is the pattern to follow in seeking to change our environments for Christ. We cannot do it alone. It is through small Christian communities working together that change will come.

The need for community

We all need community.

Our society places value on being independent. Some independence is good for character, but too much independence results in loneliness, which is a major cause of distress in people's lives.

To be fully human people need people. It is natural for people to join together in groups. Society is made up of groups, families, work groupings, social, cultural, political groups, etc.

People naturally seek community for close fellowship and mutual support, but most groups do not fulfil these basic need. Some groups can be destructive, others are superficial, unable to empower their members. What is needed is Christian communities.

Christian community

Christianity is based on community; this is God's plan for us. (Matt 18:20, Eccl 4:9-10,12)

In a Christian community people are

- united with Christ
- guided by the Holy Spirit (Eph 6:18)
- accepted and accepting
- united in their diversity (1 Cor 12:12-13)
- working to share Christ with others through living out God's love

A Christian community does not live for itself alone. It should be salt and light for the world. Christian community

- is grounded in love (John 15:12)
- sees apostolic action as an essential part of its life. (Eph 2:10)
- can, by its example, encourage fellow Christians to influence others
- can affect its whole environment in all areas of life (1 Cor 5:6)

How can we build Christian Communities?

Cursillo shows us how to build and sustain Christian groups.

We have lived the pattern within this three days by

- getting to know each other
- sharing our problems, needs and joys in self-giving
- joining together in prayer and worship
- and experiencing the joy of grace.

As we were asked on the first evening we have added

- our idealism by believing in the possibility of the very best and faith in the work of the Holy Spirit.
- our self-surrender by giving ourselves in generosity of spirit, to God and each other.
- our spirit of charity in love and humility.

These are the elements that form Christian community. All of these elements have been experienced in these three days.

To change our environments we should follow the same pattern, joining with other Christians in a small group, working to form communities through which God's transforming love flows into our environments.

Conclusion

We live in a world where there is pain and suffering. Jesus calls us to join him in bringing healing. For us as individuals this can be overwhelming. Within a Christian community we can be strengthened and encouraged to persevere.

Will we join in God's plan, answer God's call, love one another in community and share the good news of Christ?

FOURTH DAY

Living the vision

General comments

‘We must keep in mind that group reunions are not held so that there may be more people to attend the Cursillos, but that Cursillos are held so that there may be more people to make a group reunion.’ *Eduardo Bonin, one of the founders of Cursillo in Structure of Ideas, p80*

This talk is the pinnacle of the weekend’s talks. It aims to take the new Cursillistas from the newly-built community of the three days into the ongoing support of the wider Cursillo community, to continue deepening their commitment to Christ and his plans for the world.

It prepares them to hold on to what they have learned during the weekend, emphasising the need for perseverance, and explaining the support structures provided by Cursillo.

Pointing out the dangers of ‘going it alone’, it focuses on the mutual help Christians get from sharing and fellowship. Group reunion and Ultreya are presented as an effective way to achieve this.

Since it uses personal witness to encourage listeners to use these two support structures, it needs to be given by someone who is living the Cursillo method and has a clear understanding of the Cursillo message. This is normally the lay leader of the weekend

Place in the weekend’s talks

This is the last talk of the weekend. It puts into place the final piece in the dove-tailed structure of the Cursillo talks.

The first day’s talks have presented the call to deeper commitment to Christ and the ideal of the Christian life, which includes outreach. The second day speaks of the serious work necessary to become fully dedicated, effective apostles. In the earlier talks on this day, they have been shown how to work towards changing their own worlds, and the need to be growing in Christ, working for him with the support of a Christian community. This talk shows them how that can happen and how to continue in the apostolic ideal, deepening their life in Christ.

Aim

To offer the participants Cursillo’s particular means of support to live out their commitment to Christ and to serving others for him, and to inspire them to use it.

Specific objectives

- To draw together the themes of the weekend’s talks, emphasising the fundamentals of being a Christian.
- To introduce the concept of Group Reunion and Ultreya.
- To show that Group reunion and Ultreya enable us to share our Christian experience with a small group of Christian friends, so that we may grow and persevere as apostles.
- To explain basic details of their format and a little of how they work.
- To share how Group Reunion and Ultreya have helped in the speaker’s growth as a Christian.

Presentation

This talk needs to hold the attention of a tiring group. It should be both instructive and inspirational. There should be a clear explanation of the practical supports it is presenting and the speaker's enthusiasm should build hope in the listeners. The new Cursillistas need to understand the importance of Group Reunion and Ultreya as the strong supports which will enable them to continue to follow Christ. Group reunion and Ultreya should not be presented as extra responsibilities, but as tools to help with existing responsibilities as Christians.

The authentic witness of the speaker to the power of Group reunion and Ultreya is very important. The keynote is confidence, building the assurance that we are not alone, that support will continue when we go home. We can meet the challenge of apostolic action with Christ. Of course, this promise must be followed up by the team and the Cursillo community at large.

Atmosphere

The weekend endeavours to convey joy, and enthusiasm to work with God. There have been a lot of words, but now we need to prepare candidates to return home and go forward in their fourth day. This talk provides insights with just enough detail to show that the support structures are worked out. There is assurance from the speaker's strong, convincing and authentic personal witness that this support works, and will work for them, too. The unity between the Three Days and the Fourth Day of the post-Cursillo, shown by this talk, demonstrates a new way of attending to their Christian life. It should create a sense of expectancy about the Fourth Day.

OUTLINE

The Three Days are nearly over.

They can become a pleasant memory, of little permanent value to you or to the Kingdom of God OR they can be the beginning of an ongoing adventure with God, working within his plans for the rest of your life. This is known in Cursillo as the Fourth Day.

Recap the message of the weekend.

God has called us

- To direct our whole lives to God. *Piety*
- To develop a fully Christian attitude to God and our world. *Study*
- To be witnesses of this good news in our everyday life *Action*
- To be God's agents for change within our surroundings. *Leaders*
- To transform our environments for Christ. *Changing the Environments*
- To be the Church in the world. *Laity and Christian Community*

Persevering with Christian living

To meet this challenge takes perseverance.

We will face three dangers from ourselves

- over-confidence in our selves – thinking we can do it alone. (John 15:4)
- lack of confidence in ourselves – thinking we are incapable of anything worthwhile. (John 15:5)
- false Christianity - thinking that doing good things makes us Christian.

These dangers can be overcome through being accountable to God and others for the way we live our Christian lives. This can be achieved within

- a personal relationship with Christ, consciously living and growing in his grace.
- close relationships with other Christians, gaining strength from sharing. Two friends are stronger than two people working individually. (Matthew 18:20)

Cursillo provides a method to persevere and to grow as Christians in the Fourth Day.

The method consists of

- One- to-one help from a trusted Christian friend or minister, Spiritual Direction
- A small group of Christian friends, Group Reunion
- A larger Christian community, Ultreya.

Spiritual Direction has already been spoken of by the *Christian Living* speaker. This talk deals with *Group Reunion* and *Ultreya*.

Group Reunion

Group Reunion is designed to nurture the commitment to God made on the Three Days. It is the regular meeting of a group of Christian friends, who gather to become better friends and better Christians. It involves friendship, sharing and encouragement and is a way to

- support each other in developing as Christians by encouraging each other to live lives of grace each day. (Hebrews 10:24)
- develop deep Christian friendships as a source of Christian community. (Matt 18:20)
- help each other be Christ in the situations of our everyday lives. (Luke 10:1)

Method of Group Reunion

We grow more quickly through sharing and planning in a small group. In Group Reunion we share our relationship with Christ, our plans to bring him to others, and rely on each other's support to live as Christians.

(This section could be the appropriate place to share relevant personal experience.)

The card has questions to start discussions rather than a list to be followed slavishly.

We share in

- prayer. Contact with God brings us closer to each other. We offer each other support in prayer.
- our experience of life with Christ. *Piety* How have I drawn closer to Christ? When was I most aware of him?
- our efforts to learn more about God and the Christian life. *Study* What matters is not the stage we have reached, but that we are continuing to develop a Christian mindset. (Romans 12:2)

- our plans to reach out to others, and what we have done. *Action Planning* holds us to the reality of our calling as Christians. Sharing successes and failures reminds us that God can work in both for even small actions can have large consequences.

Practical aspects of the group

- Size: three to five people is ideal.
- Regularity and frequency of meetings: ideally weekly.
- Faithfulness: what we are doing is in response to our calling from God.
- Discretion: keeping what is shared within the group creates trust and provides the freedom for honest sharing.
- Honesty: the foundation for authentic relationships.

Group reunion aims to create and strengthen unique Christian friendships in a group which is outward looking, not self-centred. It may take time to find the people with whom you can build this kind of friendship. It is worth the effort and commitment involved. Explain that sponsors and others in the Cursillo community have a responsibility to help them find a group.

THIS COULD BE THE APPROPRIATE POINT TO DISTRIBUTE GROUP REUNION CARDS.

This part of the talk is followed by a model Group reunion or by table discussion allowing team members to share their own experience of Group reunion.

Ultreya

The Reunion of the Groups

Ultreya is a Spanish word, adopted from Cursillo's origins in the pilgrimage to the tomb of St James the Apostle at Compostella. It was the encouraging cry used by pilgrims to each other as they climbed the mountainous terrain, 'Onward and upward!' It carries the sense of continuing striving and perseverance!

Ultreyas are regular gatherings of wider sections of the Cursillo community, intended to encourage us on our spiritual journey. They provide an opportunity to share the experiences of Christian living within a larger group.

The purpose of the Ultreya

Ultreyas are held

- To keep alive the spirit of friendship of the weekends,
- To renew the commitment to living out our calling from God.
- To encourage us to continue drawing closer to Christ.
- To share experiences of reaching out to change our environments.
- To provide the additional strength and vision that comes from being part of a wider community.

The Content of the Ultreya

Ultreyas do not have a fixed format. However they must include:

- Prayer.
- Floating Group Reunions. Similar to permanent Group Reunion, but with people from different groups, to offer a broader vision. They also allow people to renew or create friendships and can help them find a permanent group reunion.

ACMA Talk Guidelines 2007

- A Witness Talk, a short talk covering aspects of piety, study, or action which have been part of the speaker's recent efforts to live the Christian ideal.
- Spiritual Direction, a Spiritual Director reflecting the light of the Gospel onto what has been shared.

Singing and time to share fellowship are also usually included, providing an expression of joy in serving God.

Conclusion

What is important is not simply continuing in the Cursillo movement, but living an authentic Christian life. What Cursillo provides in the Fourth Day, Spiritual Direction, Group Reunion and Ultreya, are not ends in themselves, but together are means to enable us to live more fully with and for Christ. The strength of Christian community is its encouragement to us to be leaders who bring others to Christ.

Your Cursillo weekend is a triple encounter
with Christ
with one another
with a living Christian Community.

It is intended to prepare you for group reunion and Ultreya so you will be able to lead an effective Christian life.

This is the only opportunity for the Lay Director to share personal witness with the new Cursillistas. Be sure to bring genuine witness into the talk, both in the Group Reunion and Ultreya sections, to convince the listeners that the Cursillo method in the Fourth Day really works in your life.

Table communities may now discuss experiences of Ultreya, and offer new Cursillistas the opportunity to ask questions about Group Reunion or Ultreya.

History of Cursillo

General Comments

A brief history of Cursillo can be found in the ACMANZ handbook, vol 1, pp6ff; or in a slightly amended form on the National web-page at www.anglicancursillo.org.au/history.htm.

While this talk can be part of the Lay Director's script, it may be preferable for it to be given by a SA or other team member, e.g. proctor or musician, for a short change of voice and as introducing another member of the team.

If chapel cover is provided it should be unobtrusive prayer from a team member within the room. It is not necessary to have a speaker's song.

Place in the weekend's talks

This talk does not form part of the original Cursillo talk outlines. It has been added over the years to give those sharing the weekend an understanding of Cursillo's place in the church. It remains an optional talk.

It is part of the first session in the conference room, on the first evening of the Cursillo. Since this evening is demanding and lengthy, for the speaker to keep the talk brief – 5-6 minutes duration – is a valuable contribution to the start of the Cursillo, and worth the effort involved.

Aim

To reassure candidates that Cursillo is a movement in the mainstream of the church.

Specific Objectives

- To present the origins of Cursillo.
- To show the spread of Cursillo from the Spanish Catholic church to the Anglican Church in Australia.
- To explain that Cursillo is present within their diocese at the request of a bishop, and under the supervision of a bishop.

Presentation

The talk should be presented in a simple and conversational manner, avoiding the feel of a lecture. The emphasis should be on Cursillo as a movement of the church, rather than a detailed explanation of its history. At the same time, it needs sufficient dates and places to identify Cursillo as a wide-spread movement of the church.

Atmosphere

The team will have been working to make the candidates feel at ease, since they arrived. However at this stage many of the candidates will be feeling unsure of the situation, aware of being largely among strangers, and wondering how they will find the weekend. (How strong this feeling is will vary between individuals.) This talk can be part of the process of reassuring them that they are in safe hands, and should help them to relax before the renewed challenge of the silent retreat.

OUTLINE

Origin of Cursillo

- Commenced in Spain in the Catholic Church in the 1940's.
- The purpose of the founders was to help youth in their city know Christ better.
- Founded with 'a spirit of pilgrimage' (moving onward spiritually) – linked to plans for an actual pilgrimage to the tomb of St James at Compostela.
- The first 'weekend' was held in the late 1940's – men only.

The spread of Cursillo

- Through Spain.
- To Spanish-speaking Catholic churches in South and North America, 1957.
- To the English-speaking Catholic church in North America, then into the Episcopal church in USA and the Canadian Anglican church, 1970's.
- Now world-wide, with similar movements in other mainstream Christian churches.

Cursillo is brought to Australia

- Cursillo brought by teams from Canada to Canberra and Goulburn diocese in 1979
- Its spread through Australia has involved large-scale links and co-operation between the dioceses. In Australia it is estimated that more than 18 000 people have attended a Cursillo Three Day Weekend.
- Now in 17 dioceses in Australia, and was taken to New Zealand by a team from Brisbane.

Cursillo in this diocese

- Share which diocese brought Cursillo into your diocese.
- Explain that Cursillo will only come to a diocese at the invitation of the Diocesan bishop. Which bishop invited Cursillo to the diocese and when it began.
- Cursillo in the diocese runs under the oversight of the Diocesan Bishop or the bishop's appointee. Name the Episcopal overseer.
- Perhaps some other brief comment on Cursillo's role in the diocese.

Conclusion

Those sharing in this weekend are following in the steps of many other Christians. Most of them have found real value in the weekend. We pray you will, too.

Joy of Giving talk

General comments

This optional talk is an addition to the set weekend talks, and is often given in conjunction with instructions on an offering to be made at the final Eucharist to cover the costs of the weekend or for ongoing costs of Cursillo. *Where appropriate, a sample script for these instructions, suited to the individual diocese, may be included with these talk guidelines.*

Place in the weekend's talks

This talk is normally given on the Sunday morning of the weekend.

This talk has been seen in the past as an encouragement to those listening to give generously at the offering, but in keeping with the concept of Cursillo and its call to respond to God's grace its emphasis should be on the joy that comes from giving back to God, in all the ways that we are able.

Aim

To encourage listeners to consider the joy that can come from offering back for God's use our time, talents and money, in return for all he has done for us.

Specific Objectives

- To remind listeners of what God has given us.
- To point to the joy experienced by the team through being able to give during the weekend.
- To encourage listeners to consider the joy they can receive from giving back to God.

Presentation

This should be a short talk, less than 5 minutes, as it is an addition to a day that is demanding in what is being presented. If the speaker is also required to speak about the practicalities of the final offering, they should consider whether it may be more appropriate to do this as the introduction, and follow by some general thoughts on the joy we can have in giving.

Atmosphere

By this stage of the weekend there may be a sense of gratitude. It is important for the integrity of the weekend that there be no aspect of manipulation to generous giving in what is presented in this talk.

OUTLINE

Introduction

Giving is an expression of love. It involves putting the good of someone else ahead of our own interests. When our act brings good to the other, we rejoice.

God's giving – our role model

We have all benefited from God's giving. For our good, God the Father gave his Son; Jesus gave his life; the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives is a continuing gift, enabling us to please God and live for him. (John 3:16; Hebrews 12:2; Romans 8:3-5)

God's gift to us of life brings him joy. We are encouraged to give (Luke 6.38)

Giving on the Cursillo weekend

We have a need to give of ourselves. During this Cursillo we have all been doing this in our table communities, opening ourselves with one another as we have shared our thoughts and feelings.

The wider Cursillo community has given us the gift of loving prayer support, which we have known about through the palanca.

The members of team hope that you will have realized the joy they have experienced in being able to give of themselves in serving on the weekend.

Personal experience

A personal experience of the joy which the speaker has experienced in giving will add to the impact of this message. Try to make it one the listeners will relate to. It is good if it emphasises the joy of sacrificial giving. Real joy comes when we are prepared to do the little extra, more than feels comfortable, as we put God and others ahead of ourselves.

Conclusion

In our Christian life we will find many opportunities to give of our time, our talents and our money – all that we are.

Above all, God asks that our giving be done with love, in response to his love for us.

(1 Cor.12:27 through Ch 13)