

## *Canadian Anglican Cursillo*

### **HELPFUL HINTS:**

#### **Encouraging Men to Attend a Cursillo Weekend**



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It is an interesting paradox that Cursillo, which was developed by Christian men as a men's movement aimed at bringing men back to the Church, now finds it difficult to attract men to become involved.

#### **What discourages men from attending a Cursillo weekend?**

This is one of those million dollar questions without a single answer. What discourages men from attending a Cursillo Weekend and from becoming involved in the Fourth Day following their Weekend?

##### **1. Work related reasons–**

- The feasibility of taking 3-days off work to attend a Cursillo Weekend, perhaps longer depending on the location of the weekend, may be daunting for some.
- It may be difficult for those who do **not** work a regular 9-5, five-day a week job – i.e. the shift worker or those who are required to work Saturdays and Sundays as a regular part of their work week, to attend or become involved in Fourth Day activities.

##### **2. Timing of the Weekend-**

Some men may be employed in seasonal jobs (e.g. farming, fishing, hunting, etc.) which prevents them from attending a weekend which is scheduled for the time of year when their work schedule is at its peak time.

##### **3. Family Related reasons–**

- Commitment to other family members' activities, such as sports or arts programs for the children.
- Caring for family while their spouse is at work.

##### **4. Apprehension/Anxiety–**

- One of the principle reasons for not attending or participating in Cursillo is fear of the unknown.
- The apprehension that comes with not being sure of what to expect on the weekend, what it is about, and what might be expected of them after the weekend is over.

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- They may think that with their busy schedule now, they may not be able to contribute in a way that might be expected of them later.
- We lead by example, as we should, but what someone else sees us doing could lead them to believe that this may be too much work for them.
- Sometimes there may be anxiety around being considered “too good” or seen as “better than others” if they attend a church sponsored weekend.
- People want to be seen as “normal” and are in fear of the changes that may be in store for them

**5. Finances-** Some simply cannot afford to go.

**6. Life priorities** – Society often dictates other activities as having more importance than Church itself.

### **What would encourage men to attend a Cursillo weekend?**

**Planning the Weekend** – Secretariats could plan the dates for the Cursillo weekends (spring or fall) at a time that best suits the working habits of the community. For instance, do not plan a weekend in a fishing community when fishing season is open or in an agricultural area when it is planting or harvesting time. Weekends might also be planned for a three-day holiday weekend so that no time off work is incurred.

**Lead by Example** - Just as setting an example may hinder, showing by example how we now live and act, may cause someone to want a little piece of what they see daily in us.

**Sponsorship done well** is the main ingredient in encouraging men to attend a Cursillo Weekend. An “effective sponsor” will:

- Share all they can to make the candidate feel comfortable.... by sharing such things as your experience of a new freedom, a way to get to know yourself better and/or a way to become more mature in your faith.
- Personal contact - The sponsor should always approach the potential candidate in a suitable setting, considering the location and atmosphere, and the potential candidate’s privacy.
- A Sponsor must not overkill in their approach to the candidate; being too anxious to get him to a weekend, could turn him off.
- Be open and enthusiastic when talking about the weekend.
- Perhaps invite the potential candidate to Ultreyas, or to participate in Group Reunions, so that he might get some idea of what Cursillo is about. Discuss your active participation in Group Reunion and the Fourth Day, and what this means to you.
- Provide the potential candidate with the weekend dates in plenty of time to plan for time-off from work, etc.
- Discuss weekend finances – Before the weekend, discuss with your friend what the weekend costs are and how they are handled. If you know that your friend is financially

strapped and this is what holds him back from participating, offer to help him or find other sources of funds perhaps within your Parish (i.e. a Men's Group, etc.).

- Name some active Cursillo friends that you both know, and suggest that he talk to these men as well.
- Walk with his candidate and guide him through the weekend and beyond into his Fourth Day.

Using the above suggestions will promote a friendly, face-to-face discussion with a friend and hopefully bear fruit in that individual becoming a "Cursillo weekend candidate".

**Impact of Spouse's Attendance** – A man might be more likely to attend a weekend after seeing the positive and transformative effect it has had on his spouse, especially if the couple is used to doing things together.

**Involvement of Lay Men** – In order to reach men who are "far away" (i.e. not heavily involved in parish life), speak of Cursillo as a Lay-Led Movement, since some may be sceptical of what they perceive as clergy and Church Movements trying to "convert" them.

**Clergy Support** - For reaching men who are "near" (already very involved in parish life), support and encourage your clergy in talking about Cursillo at church. Offer to provide a Cursillo pulpit talk or some other presentation at your church.

Keep in mind the Cursillo expression: *Make a friend, be a friend, and bring your friend to Christ*. Developing a trusting friendship takes time. Don't become discouraged if your friend needs this time to make the decision to become involved in Cursillo. Continue to support and pray for your friend, trusting God to help prepare his heart.