

Canadian Anglican Cursillo

ULTREYA



Preamble

Ultreya is a Spanish word meaning “onward” or “keep on going!” It is a cry of encouragement. The Ultreya is the gathering where Cursillistas come to support and encourage each other as a witnessing apostolic community.

The theme for all Ultreyas is "transforming the world for Christ". It is about what we are doing for Christ, not what Christ is doing for us.

Ultreya is:

- Where permanent Group Reunions gather and are revitalized by sharing with others.
- Where new Cursillistas are welcomed into the larger community.
- Where we can find support through the sharing of one another's experience of living with Jesus Christ.
- Where additional spiritual guidance is available.
- Where we are inspired by witness talks to be courageous in transforming our environments for Christ.

Where practical, Ultreyas should be held in different areas of the diocese, so that everybody has reasonable access to participate. Everyone should feel comfortable at an Ultreya, finding strength and courage to take Jesus Christ back into the happenings and environment of their everyday life.

An Ultreya is an event of spiritual encouragement complete in itself so it is not appropriate to mix it with a worship service. If a Eucharist is held before or after an Ultreya, it is a separate event which should not be presented as part of the Ultreya.

Suggested schedule for an Ultreya:

7:30 Opening prayer by designated leader.

7:35 Floating Group Reunions.

8:00 Leader advises the groups that five minutes remain to complete sharing.

8:05 Leader introduces lay witness speaker. The topic is "How I am transforming my environment for Christ." This talk should last no longer than 10 minutes.

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8:15 Response to witness talk may be one or two prearranged responses and/or general invitation from the group.

8:20 Spiritual director gives Biblical reflections inspired by the witness talk and responses.

8:25 Closing prayers by leader with opportunity for others to participate.

An Ultreya should be approximately one hour long. Brief Cursillo announcements should be made at the end of the Ultreya. Singing will be included at various times throughout the evening as requested by the designated leader.

Role of the Ultreya Leader

1. During the initial part of the Ultreya when welcoming people, remember:
 - After a weekend, new Cursillistas attending their first Ultreya should be introduced to the wider community.
 - Newcomers or visitors should be introduced to the Ultreya gathering.
 - Introduce the Spiritual Director for the evening.
 - Participants should be aware of exactly what an Ultreya is.
2. At all Ultreyas, it is essential to remind everyone of the purpose of Ultreya. Particular reference should be made to the Floating Group Reunions and the differences between these and the permanent Group Reunions. The level of sharing during the reunions at Ultreyas should not be at the same personal level as in the permanent Group Reunions. People should be reminded to focus on piety, study and action rather than personal problems.
3. Before guiding everyone into small groups, the leader should make it clear whether the opening and closing prayer will be said in the smaller groups or whether these will be said before their formation and after coming together again. The leader should also remind everyone not to group with the people in their permanent Group Reunion, and ensure the participants have Floating Group Reunion cards.

Role of the Lay Witness Speaker

Lay Witness speakers at an Ultreya must encourage their brothers and sisters in Christ. The talk is up to 10 minutes long, no more. It is:

1. About Jesus Christ - how we live with Him and how we are trying to bring others to know Him in their daily lives.
2. It is not a testimonial about what God has done for us, but a witness talk, what we have done to introduce people to Christ or to change environments for Christ with God's help.
3. About a recent experience within the last six weeks – how through faith, study and action we are trying to draw closer to Christ and bring others with us to Him.
4. Concrete and practical—describe how the action was planned within an environment and what happened regardless of whether or not it was an obvious or immediate success. If a Bible verse or passage was an inspiration in the action, mention it.

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Pray about the talk.

Do not over prepare.

Speak clearly, slowly and informally - the talk is being shared with friends.

If possible, let the Spiritual Director and music leaders know the theme of the talk ahead of time, and mention any scripture references, so they may be able to prepare and select music that would relate well to your talk.

The focus is simply on Jesus Christ in one's life, so the talk should not be a sensational one, a sermon, Bible teaching, a spiritual autobiography or a talk about Cursillo.

It is helpful to consider these questions:

- Does this talk show that Christ is in our lives?
- Does Jesus have the most important place in the talk?
- Will it show how much we want to follow Him?
- Will the experience shared give others the courage to try to transform their environments for Christ?
- Can others readily identify with the situation?

Role of the Response Speaker

The purpose of the response is to provide confirmation by brief comment on shared experiences from a different environment.

A response to the witness talk should only last for one to two minutes. Someone may be asked in advance to respond or there may be an open invitation for responses after the witness talk.

Respondents who have different life situations or daily environments from the witness speaker can show how the same principles of living with Christ and witnessing for Him apply to us all. This will strengthen the encouragement already given by the speaker to others. The responses should be spontaneous and related directly to the theme of the talk.

Role of the Spiritual Director

Where a spiritual director is available for the Ultreya, everyone should be advised that the Spiritual Director will be available to meet with people throughout the duration of the Ultreya. The Spiritual Director can give advice in this direction, but people should be aware that these brief meetings are not a time to deal extensively with any one person's spiritual life. Rather, they are to provide an initial dialogue in spiritual direction. If a priest is not available at the Ultreya, it is advisable not to have an alternative person as spiritual director for the evening.

The Spiritual Director will give a Biblical reflection lasting up to five minutes after the witness talk and responses. This reflection is generally provided by a priest who is the Spiritual Director for the Ultreya but, it may be that a priest is not available. In such cases the Ultreya leader may ask an appropriate lay person to provide this response.

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The respondent is asked to pull everything together (witness talk and responses) and relate it to some part of the Gospel. Where possible the respondent should have some prior knowledge from the witness speaker of the content of the witness talk. Although notes may be of assistance, the reflection should not be a prepared formal written talk, but rather like the witness talk itself, simple and informal.

This is the teaching part of the Ultreya when those present can learn how the Gospel relates to daily life.

Further Reference:

National Episcopal Cursillo Library: Ultreya Booklet