

Canadian Anglican Cursillo

ULTREYA



Ultreya is one of the least understood parts of the Cursillo movement, starting with the name itself. "Ultreya!" is a cry of encouragement. It means "Keep on going!" or "Onward!"

The role of the Ultreya is to link Christians together.

ULTREYA IS

- Where all the 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 the witness talks to be courageous in transforming our environments for Christ.

The theme for all Ultreyas is "transforming the world for Christ" and it is important not to be distracted from that task

Each diocesan secretariat is responsible for determining where Ultreyas will be established. In some dioceses this responsibility is transferred to a Post Cursillo committee **or** Ultreya committee. Where

practical, Ultreyas should be held in different areas of the diocese, so that everybody has reasonable access to an Ultreya. In larger dioceses this has led to the establishment of Regional Ultreyas with a Diocesan Ultreya held in a central location once or twice a year.

Rather than being Cursillo centered, the Ultreya *is* Christ Centered and concentrates on Jesus working within each of us to bring the whole world to Him. Any committed Christian should be able to feel comfortable at an Ultreya, finding strength and courage to take Jesus Christ back into the happenings and environment of everyday life. Ultreya is an event of spiritual encouragement complete in itself for all Christian people, so it is not appropriate to mix it with a service or liturgy. If the Eucharist is held before or after an Ultreya, it is a separate event which should not be presented as part of Ultreya.

ULTREYA OUTLINE

An Ultreya should be approximately one hour long.

The appropriate committee as requested by the diocesan secretariat will select the site for the Ultreya and make sure the required facilities are available. They will select witness speakers for the evening and arrange for a leader for the Ultreya. The coordinators

Ultreya

should meet for prayer prior to the Ultreya, and then ensure that all people are welcomed when they arrive, particularly any newcomers.

The following is a suggested schedule for an Ultreya.

7:30 Opening prayer by designated leader.

- Welcome to new Cursillistas
- Introduction of non-Cursillistas and newcomers.
- Reminder of the purpose of Ultreya and group reunion.
- Advise who the spiritual director for the evening is, and where he or she will be located during the grouping sessions for consultation.
- Ensure all have a reunion card. Arrange formation of small groups by an appropriate method

7:35 Floating group reunions

8:00 Advise 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 deals with recent experience(s) and is Christ centred, not Cursillo centred. (See *Guidelines for Speakers*). This talk should last no longer than 10 minutes.

8:15 Response to witness talk may be one or two prearranged responses and/or general invitation from the group. The purpose of the responses is to provide confirmation by brief comment on shared experiences from a different environment.

8:25 Spiritual director gives Biblical reflections inspired by the witness talk and responses.

8:30 Closing prayers by leader with opportunity for others to participate.

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.

GUIDELINES FOR THE ULTREYA LEADER

1. During the initial part of the Ultreya when you are welcoming people, remember

- After a weekend, new Cursillistas attending their first Ultreya should be introduced to the wider community.
- Whenever newcomers **or** visitors are attending they should be introduced to the Ultreya gathering.
- In some dioceses non-Cursillistas are welcome at Ultreyas and if they attend they should also be introduced. In particular, they should be aware of exactly what an Ultreya is. This explanation is the responsibility of the Ultreya leader as well as the person who brings guests.

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 apostolic action rather than ongoing problems, etc.

3. When breaking into small groups for reunions, whatever system is used it should be done in such a way as not to cause confusion. Particular care should be taken by the Ultreya leaders to ensure that newcomers and/or visitors fully understand this stage of the Ultreya.

4. Before breaking into small groups the leader should make it clear whether the opening and closing prayer should be done in the smaller groups or whether these will be done before breaking and after coming together again. The leader should also remind everyone not to group with the people in their permanent group reunion

5. Where a spiritual director is available for the Ultreya, he or she should be introduced and people advise that the director will be available to meet with people during the time of the reunions. Generally such meetings are for people who may want to start thinking about regular spiritual direction. The 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 probably advisable not to have an alternative person as spiritual director for the Ultreya. However, a lay person can provide the Biblical reflection after the witness talk and responses (see "Response Speakers" and "Spiritual Directors.")

GUIDELINES FOR ULTREYA SPEAKERS

"Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming near." Hebrews 10: 24-25

THE LAY WITNESS TALK

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 – how through faith, study and action we are trying to draw closer to Christ and bring others with us to Him. Describe efforts to do this in a recent experience.
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.

Pray about the talk.

In 10 minutes one can not say much, so make the point well and simply relate one experience without more examples or detail. Do not over prepare.

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

If possible, let the spiritual director know the theme of the talk ahead of time, and mention any scripture references, to help him or her prepare.

Also, try to let the music leaders know what you will talk about; they may be able to select music that would relate well to the theme of 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?

RESPONSE SPEAKERS

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

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.

Responses can take the form of either:

Confirmation: i.e., yes, I've done that too, it works," *or*

Affirmation: i.e., "I have heard that this is a good thing to do" or "I have a situation where I am going to try that"

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

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.

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*