

Canadian Anglican Cursillo



GROUP REUNION

Preamble

The heart of Cursillo is Group Reunion which emphasises the value of personal contact and sharing with other Christians following the Cursillo weekend. It is a method to help individuals continue their growth in Christ which started on the Cursillo Weekend and to do this with friends.

In the publication The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement, Eduardo Bonin, one of the founders of the Movement stated: *“The Group Reunion is not an extra event, but rather a form of life itself; it is not an added obligation one takes on, but rather a help toward perseverance; it is not a mere method, but rather a tangible realization of the dogma of the Communion of Saints. It would be very difficult to find reasons to justify missing a meeting, especially if one understands that the most important function of the Group Reunion is to give a spiritual dimension to everything in one’s life - which should, after all, be one’s first priority and greatest joy.”*

Definition of Group Reunion

A Group Reunion is simply a small group of friends, or those who wish to be friends, who meet regularly to share their Christian journey using the Cursillo method of Piety, Study and Action. These are “graced” friendships as Jesus is at the center of the gathering. In the publication, The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement, it states that, *“In friendship everything can be shared: all that one is, all that one does, and all that one has.”* The principle of grouping is based on Jesus’s promise to be with us whenever *“two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them.”* (Matthew 18:20 NRSV) It also has roots in the activities of the disciples after the Resurrection of Jesus as found in the Book of Acts 2:42 *“they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers”*.

Purpose of Group Reunion

The purpose of Group Reunion is one of helping each person in the Group to reach their full potential in Christ. It is also one of strengthening each person’s commitment to become the Church in their own environments and in the world. One hoped for outcome of the Group Reunion is that the members of the Group will mature in their faith as they share their journey together. Another outcome might be that they would become bolder in bringing a Christ-like attitude to their environments.

Eduardo Bonin, one of the founders of the Cursillo Movement said, *“We do not have Group Reunions so that there will be people to attend a Cursillo Weekend; on the contrary, we have Cursillo Weekends so that there will be people to make Group Reunions.”*

The Order of Group Reunion

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Group Reunion begins and ends with prayer. Using the Group Reunion card will help to keep the discussion focused on Piety, Study, and Action, each discussed separately. The card also helps structure sharing and keeps us on track so that the time together does not become another “gettogether” to chat.

Characteristics of a Group

Size: Three to five people who agree to meet regularly is ideal.

Regularity: Weekly group reunion assures continuity and steady progress in Christian growth. First, there is personal growth which is discovering who you are - your unique gifts, strengths and weaknesses; your spiritual and intellectual formation into a whole person. Second, there is group building, becoming members of a team. A group does not become a group just by sitting down together to talk. It takes time and it takes caring, sharing, forgiving, and affirming. Third, there is individual and collective apostolic action.

Seriousness: Meeting and sharing is of great importance to each member in fulfilling their calling. Essential to living the group reunion is the desire to be a saint and an apostle. Saints are people who know God's love and grace and who live their lives based on this relationship. Apostles are saints who have a mission to share that same knowledge with others.

Sincerity: Each member seeks to build authentic relationships by being open and honest. It is important that each person does some history-giving. This means giving each person a chance to share personal concerns, fears, significant events, places and people in their life, as well as present hurts and joys. Affirmation grows out of history-giving, where the members respond as a community of love, trust and acceptance to the particular needs that are brought out in the sharing.

Discretion: Whatever is shared in the Group must be kept confidential and stay within the Group.

Leading: No one in the group is the leader; each person contributes to and takes responsibility for the life of the group.

Guidelines for Effective Sharing

There are **three** levels of sharing:

1. **Chitchatting** is just small talk.

2. **Head to head** sharing is more serious in that it is exchanging ideas and concepts, but the exchange is strictly of ideas, detached from the person.

3. **Heart to heart** sharing lets the other person know where you stand in relation to ideas and how you feel about them; it is the communing from which community is born. When one person in a group takes that leap of faith and lets the others in on their life, the group is under a real obligation as the Body of Christ to be ministering servants to that person.

So, therefore:

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- **Listen without interrupting or probing.** Our greatest gift is to listen, and this could be all the person wants or needs. There is a thin line between listening and probing. To listen is to enable a person to say all that they do want to say. To probe is to make a person share what they do not want to share.
- **Avoid giving advice.** If someone in the group has had a similar experience, they can share the experience without telling the other person what to do.
- **Avoid judging.** We are all different. Some sensitive areas of disagreement in lifestyle, theology and outlook may arise. Love will be put to the test in accepting people where they are and what they believe.
- **It should not be a Bible Study** as the group's piety and action may be omitted during that type of gathering.
- **It is not a social event.** Members of the group may lose interest in sharing their walk in faith and lose their accountability for their apostolic actions if grouping is turned into a social gathering.

To empower someone means to bring out the best in that person. When listening, caring, loving and complete acceptance is offered, the Group Reunion will be a success and its members much stronger in their walk with Jesus.

Sometimes Group Reunions do not work out. It may have been that the Group did not completely understand how it was meant to function. It may be necessary to move on to another Group. This should not be considered a failure. Group Reunions do not last forever; they change and grow, just as people do.

Conclusion

The Group Reunion provides the environment and the motivation for its members to actively engage in Piety, Study, and Action in their everyday life. We will never outgrow our need for Group Reunion, because we need to share our Christian life deeply in order to keep it growing. Jesus is present with us in our Group Reunion. Therefore, grouping should be prayerfully carried out so that we may know, love, and serve Him better.

Further References:

- ECM Library <https://www.episcopalcurriculum.org/documents-for-printing>
- Group Reunion Booklet
- Lay Talks Workbook
- The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement