



Canadian Anglican Cursillo

Lay Witness Talk

*Introduction: So, you have been asked to give a Lay Witness Talk....*

The purpose of this guideline is to help you become more familiar with what a Lay Witness Talk is, and isn't, and to help you feel comfortable in giving a Lay Witness Talk both within the Cursillo community and within your own everyday environments. In this guideline you will find helpful information as you prepare to give a Lay Witness Talk.

### **Witnessing in Group Reunion**

You may already be familiar with witnessing to others through participating in a Group Reunion, when you share with your group your planned Apostolic Action. This is where we take responsibility for our actions, individually and collectively, to share Christ with others and report back on our progress of how we consciously tried to communicate Christ in our daily environments.

### **Witness Talk at an Ultreya**

The Ultreya includes a Witness Talk to the larger Cursillo community. We are all capable and should be honoured to be called at any time to give witness of Christ in our lives. Speakers at an Ultreya are meant to encourage their brother and sisters in Christ. It is a demonstration of the true meaning of the word Ultreya "onward", 'upward' - A cry of encouragement to all.

## Preparing your Lay Witness Talk

- a) A Lay Witness Talk should be no longer than 10 minutes
- b) The talk is a personal story, told simply and briefly about Jesus Christ. The talk is to tell about a specific way in which you have tried to bring those He loves closer to Him. It is about how you live with Jesus at the center of your life and how your love for Him draws you to act and speak for Him.
- c) It is to be about a recent living experience (within the last 6 weeks). Tell how, through prayer and study you planned to bring someone closer to Jesus, in the normal flow of your own life.
- d) It is concrete and practical. Describe who, how, why, what, and when as you describe carrying out this action which you planned to bring one of your environments (or one person) closer to Christ. Tell what happened as a result, whether it seemed like a success or a failure.
- e) If a Bible verse inspired you in your action, you may want to center the talk around it.
- f) If you can answer "YES" to the following four questions, your talk will fulfill the requirements of an Ultreya Lay Witness Talk.
  - i. Does this talk show that Christ is in my life?
  - ii. Will it show how much I want to follow Him?
  - iii. Does Jesus Himself hold the most prominent place in the talk?
  - iv. Will this experience I am sharing stimulate people to think of things which they might plan to do to transform their home work, parish, recreation or other environments for Christ?

### **A Witness Talk is NOT**

- a) Sensational
- b) A testimonial or a conversion story
- c) A life history
- d) A Bible teaching or sermon
- e) Too emotional; sharing deep, raw, personal emotions is better shared within a more personal setting with close friends in Group Reunion or with your Spiritual Advisor.

### **Responding to a Witness Talk**

As you know, at the end of the witness talk there is a period devoted to responses from listeners.

### **Lay Response**

There may be two types of response: **Affirmation** and **Confirmation**

In an **affirming** response, the responder indicates that they understand the Christian principle or method used by the lay witness speaker has been effective for the speaker and that it might be something to try in another environment. All lay witness talks can be affirmed.

In a **confirming** response, the responder indicates that s/he has had a similar experience and has used the same principle or method of apostolic action and, through experience, confirms that it works. A confirming response can only be given if there has been a similar experience.

The main point to remember is that the response is not a critique. Each person should be very brief, only a minute or two long, to allow time for responses from the rest of the group also.

### **Summation**

Giving a witness talk may sound intimidating but it should not be – it is your opportunity to show others how you are being a faithful witness in the normal, ongoing process of life. When we centre our lives on Christ, believe in and use the Cursillo method of personal, one-to-one contact (Make a Friend, be a Friend and Bring Your Friend to Christ) then we are all doing something which can be used in a Lay Witness Talk.

We encourage a witness speaker to spend time in quiet prayer and reflection – God will provide the talk if we listen.

We all have a story that is continuous – each day God reveals to us in our prayer (piety), study (scriptures) and action (what we do) what is happening around us in all environments.

Ask Jesus to be in your everyday life and you will know what action of love to take.

Simply reveal your relationship with Jesus in your everyday life. Remember we are all called, we have all been chosen. Be yourself.



Imitating Christ is opening the door to friendship – make a friend  
– be a friend – bring a friend to Christ!

Prepared for sharing by

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