



EPISCOPAL
CURSILLO
MINISTRY

ULTREYA!

RELATIONSHIP ▪ EVANGELISM ▪ RECONCILIATION

LET US HOLD FAST TO THE HOPE WE PROFESS, BECAUSE WE CAN TRUST GOD TO KEEP HIS PROMISE. LET US BE CONCERNED FOR ONE ANOTHER, TO HELP ONE ANOTHER 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 NEARER.

HEBREWS 10:23-25

ULTREYA

The goal of the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry is to raise up witnessing apostolic leaders who will bring the world to Jesus Christ by transforming the environments in which they live. Ultreya serves as a source of encouragement and support for all apostolic leaders. The word, "Ultreya," is an ancient Spanish word meaning "onward." It was used in those times by pilgrims, as a way of encouraging each other towards their goal. "Ultreya," as used by the Cursillo community, is the regular gathering of Cursillistas and friends. It is a time to inspire us to become faithful Christian witnesses.

Thus, Ultreya is:

The place where all Cursillistas and friends come together to grow as a witnessing apostolic community. An opportunity to find personal support through the sharing of everyone's' experiences living with Jesus Christ

A time to be further inspired to grow as well as gain the courage needed to transform our environments for Christ.

A witness to the ways Christians are saints and apostles--not only in the exciting atmosphere of a Cursillo weekend, but also in the sometimes not so exciting events of day-to-day living.

The place where those who just completed a weekend, as well as their friends, are incorporated into the larger community.

Help to supply support, love, and encouragement for all Christians to change our environments for Christ.

KEEPING IT AUTHENTIC

The original Ultreya was conceived by the founders of Cursillo as an effective tool to encourage the Fourth Day community to spread the Gospel. The goal of each Ultreya is to help Cursillistas transform their world for Christ. Leaders should make sure that the activities at the Ultreya are focused on that crucial task and not distracted towards other goals. Both the Floating Group Reunion and the Lay Action Talk are designed to help the Fourth Day community grow into the vocation of evangelism and leadership development.

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THE ULTREYA FORMAT

The sample schedule below gives the format for a Ultreya in its most basic form as the founders of Cursillo envisioned it. The sample time schedule may be “plugged into” any time of day which works best for the Cursillistas who attend the Ultreya.

Prior to the Ultreya

- 7:15 pm Room and facilities are set up
- 7:15 pm Leader’s Group Reunion
Praying for the Ultreya
Studying all aspects of the Ultreya, including past successes and disappointments
Planning for the success of the current meeting and for the success of the Ultreya community
- 7:45 pm Socialization with those arriving to attend the Ultreya.

The Ultreya

- 8:00 pm One of the leaders opens the Ultreya with a prayer. The leader then divides the gathering into small groups of 3-6 persons using some predetermined method that will randomize the groups.
- 8:05 pm The leader makes sure everyone has a Floating Group Reunion card (downloaded from the ECM website).
Sharing in the floating Group Reunion is different from what occurs in the permanent Group Reunion. In a Floating Group Reunion, the Cursillistas will meet with different people each time and generally may not know much about each other’s faith journeys. The purpose of the Ultreya Group Reunion is to provide contacts with a variety of Christians from many backgrounds. In that way, each person gains insights into additional ways people live as Christians, contributing to their growth in the Christian faith.
- 8:25 pm The leader gives a five-minute warning so that anyone in a group who has not yet had a chance to share can do so.
- 8:30 pm The chairs are rearranged and the meeting is continued. A Lay Action Talk, given by one who is living the Fourth Day, is the central feature of this part of the Ultreya.
- 8:40 pm Two or three Cursillistas from different backgrounds are asked to respond to the talk, relating it to their own lives. These two respondents are asked to show how similar action for Christ was possible in their own environments or to affirm the principle of Christian life and witness that the speaker has presented. Others in the group may also respond.
Responses should be limited to one to two minutes each. These responses are not a critique of the action presented but rather affirm a common theme or principle presented in the witness talk. The lay responders should be made aware of the focus of the lay witness talk in advance of the Ultreya so that they can prepare their remarks.
- 8:45 pm The responses are followed by a **five to ten-minute** spiritual reflection by a Spiritual Advisor who ties the Lay Action Talk and Lay Responses to the Gospel. Before the Ultreya, the subject or general theme of the Lay Action Talk should be given to the Spiritual Advisor who is to respond to the Lay Action Talk.
*Since Cursillo is an evangelizing ministry of the Church, the comments of the Spiritual Advisor should challenge and encourage the participants to continue to evangelize in their Fourth Day. It is permissible to involve priests and deacons in this function who have not attended Cursillo, although the lay action witness and lay responses should be from active Cursillistas. If no priest or deacon is available, the responses can be extended to a discussion led by the lay leader. **Participants should leave with one clear thought, which was presented by the witness speaker, the responses, and Gospel summary.** The thought should be an encouraging message for their daily lives in Christ.*
- 9:00 pm Following brief announcements of Cursillo events, an informal prayer time may be conducted by the Spiritual Advisor or leader that encourages everyone in attendance to offer a prayer, either publicly or privately.

The Cursillo ministry is not separate from the Church. Cursillo seeks to build up the Church as the body of Christ. It is not a club or society or separate order. Therefore, Ultreyas are a part of the wider Christian community in which Cursillistas and non-Cursillistas are invited to attend. Ultreya community provides the Church with Christian leaders and apostles who work hand-in-hand with other Christians for the Christianizing of their environments, whether or not they have chosen to attend a Cursillo weekend.

The Cursillo Fourth Day method is a model for the Christian life. Remember that the goal of the Ultreya is always to root the spiritual fervor in the soil of perseverance in order to develop the Ultreya community's sense of apostolic vocation. It is a support for the actions of the Jesus Movement.

The entire Ultreya should take approximately one hour. A meal, music or worship may precede or follow the "Ultreya." However, the actual Ultreya does not begin with the meal. If a meal is offered, anyone should feel free to arrive after the meal for the beginning of the actual Ultreya. Also, Eucharist is not a part of Ultreya. A parish Eucharist, however, may precede or follow an Ultreya. ***Ultreya should never be a substitute for involvement in the liturgical life of one's parish.***

ULTREYA LEADERS

The success of the Ultreya presupposes the existence of permanent Group Reunions to guide the pattern of open sharing and mutual support. Group Reunion participants have experienced the benefits of sharing one's spiritual journey with others. Ultreya leaders should be several people, including a Spiritual Advisor, a coordinator, a set-up person, and someone who is chiefly responsible for selecting and working with lay action speakers and the respondents. Each Ultreya evolves its own leaders' group under the guidance of the Secretariat. There is no set way for this group to be formed or selected, such as by election or appointment. However, the importance of these leaders to the Ultreya cannot be over-stated. If there is not a dedicated and functioning leadership group, the Ultreya will suffer.

An active Fourth Day Community should **support and be supported by the Diocesan Secretariat and Servant Communities**. Some Secretariats provide training programs for Ultreya leaders. Another example of how a Secretariat can give support to an Ultreya is to provide a lay witness speaker or a clergy gospel responder to an Ultreya.

Music during Ultreya should lift and inspire. It is not the main attraction for the Ultreya meeting. Ultreya leaders should work with the available musicians to guide the musical offering. Music that supports the message of the witness talk should be emphasized.

For the health and growth of the Fourth Day, leaders may want to **plan activities other than the Ultreya meetings** if not provided by the Secretariat or Servant Community.

For example:

Training Session for Sponsors

Training Session for future Weekend team members or leaders.

"Instructed Ultreyas" to explain why there is an Ultreya and how it differs from permanent reunion groups

Other activities which support the evangelistic focus of Ultreyas.

Ultreyas should be held at least monthly if they are to be effective and not lose continuity. A regular meeting time and place helps to build continuity. The time and place of the meetings should be selected to be as inclusive as possible. Depending upon the geographic make-up of the community, they may be designed to include multiple parishes within a region or just a single parish.

LAY ACTION TALKS

The Ultreya leadership may want to develop a list of people who could potentially give witness talks. These talks are not life histories, so individuals may give witness talks on multiple occasions, depending on the stories of apostolic action they have to relate.

An alternative way of giving an action talk at Ultreyas has been to occasionally (but not often) have several members of the Fourth Day community briefly describe what they are doing for the Lord. Hearing about multiple workings of the apostolic community is often surprising, revealing, and encouraging.

THOSE WHO ARE ASKED TO GIVE ACTION TALKS SHOULD OBVIOUSLY BE COMMITTED CHRISTIANS, ACTIVE IN THE FOURTH DAY COMMUNITY AND ALSO ENTHUSIASTIC EVANGELISTS AND APOSTLES.

GUIDELINES FOR YOUR LAY ACTION TALKS

The Lay Action Talk plays an essential role in encouraging and inspiring the Fourth Day community. It should not be taken lightly but neither should it be viewed as a daunting task. Humble, tell-it-like-it-is honesty is an essential prerequisite. Do not feel unworthy of giving a talk. All of us, in striving to be Christians, have many disappointments in our lives. But, we have some successes, too. We all have had moments and experiences in our lives that can be lifted out to share with our friends.



The lay talk IS NOT a testimonial.
The difference between a Lay Action Talk and a testimonial is very simple:

A “TESTIMONIAL” IS WHAT JESUS HAS DONE FOR YOU.
A “LAY ACTION” IS WHAT YOU ARE DOING FOR HIM!”



THE LAY ACTION TALK IS:

- **About Jesus Christ** – The talk should relate how you live with Christ and show how you are trying to bring others to know Him. The aim of the witness talk is not to tell people what they should do, but rather how you love Jesus and how in loving Him you try to bring all those He loves closer to Him in the ordinary circumstances of your life.
- **About a recent living experience** – Tell how, through prayer, study and action, you are trying to bring others with you to Jesus in the normal flow of your own life. Make just one or two points and build your talk around them. The experience should have been within the six weeks prior to the talk.
- **Concrete and practical** – Make your talk vivid by describing who, how, where, why and when, as you tell of carrying out action, which you planned, to bring one of your environments closer to Christ. Tell what happened as a result, whether it seemed like a success or a disappointment. Be concrete in your conclusions.

HOW SHOULD THE ACTION TALK BE GIVEN?

- **With Palanca** — Pray all the way. Jesus reminds us, “without me you can do nothing.” Pray for God’s guiding hand to be upon the speaker and those who will hear the talk. Others may also be enlisted to pray for the talk and the Ultreya.
- **In five to ten minutes** — It is a short reflection, not a sermon. The Ultreya schedule is deliberately short.
- **Concisely** — It is better to make only one point and make it well and to tell about one experience and tell it clearly than to make more detail or examples.
- **Simply** — Speak clearly, closely, but informally, as if talking with friends – because you are! Don’t over prepare; the simpler the better.
- **With planning** — Give the theme of your talk, and any scriptural references you might plan to incorporate, to the spiritual advisor and response speakers to help in their preparation. Try to do this a few days in advance of Ultreya.

AND, THE TALK SHOULD NOT BE:

- **Sensational** — A big, flashy production number, a sermon or instruction in Christianity, or a Bible teaching is not the point of a Lay Action Talk.
- **Too emotional** — Others’ emotions will be affected best by a simple, sincere talk about Christian action. The focus is on Jesus Christ in your life.

HELPFUL QUESTIONS FOR PREPARING AN ACTION TALK:

- Does this talk show that Christ is in my life?
- Will this talk show intentional apostolic action – evangelism?
- Does Jesus hold the most important place in the talk?
- Will this experience stimulate others to think of things they might do to transform their home, work, parish, recreation, or other environment for Christ?

FORMING ULTREYAS IN DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

The Fourth Day Community in various geographical areas is not the same. There are differences in numbers of Cursillistas in a parish and the amount of travel distances between parishes. Some parishes have a large enough Fourth Day community to hold Ultreya meetings just for the parish. That community, though, should keep in mind that their parish might well consider including those from nearby parishes where there are fewer Cursillistas.

An area Ultreya is the best model to pursue if there are several small parish communities of Cursillistas in that area. The Ultreya meetings may be scheduled at a centralized location or moved around from one parish to another. If the Ultreya is moved from one location to another, a need exists to have a very effective means of communicating the time and place of each Ultreya to the Cursillistas in that area. In a rural area where people have to travel considerable distances, the provision of a meal may be necessary.

Some parishes are isolated, having only a few Cursillistas. In this case, an Ultreya meeting would be redundant to the permanent reunion groups in the parish. These small communities may consider occasional trips to attend a larger Ultreya meeting in order to be fed with new ideas and encouragement.

THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE FLOATING GROUP REUNION — A GUIDE FOR SHARING

*Please allow everyone who wishes to have a chance to talk.
This Group Reunion should not last over 30 minutes*

All say together:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in us the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and we shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

Every person in the small group is now given an opportunity to share briefly and to the point in the following areas. A person may pass if desired.

PIETY:

1. Share one spiritual aid with which you have nourished your vital union with Christ and share how it nourished this union.
 - A. Personal Prayer
 - B. Daily Office
 - C. Meditation
 - D. Examination of Conscience
 - E. Reconciliation of a Penitent
 - F. Holy Eucharist
 - G. Spiritual Direction
 - H. Family Prayer
 - I. Prayer Group
 - J. Group Reunion
 - K. Retreat or Quiet Day
 - L. Other
2. Share one moment in which you felt closest to Christ, and why.

STUDY:

3. Share one thing you have done to increase your understanding of your relationship with God and His Creation. What have you learned?
 - A. Scripture Reading
 - B. Devotional Literature
 - C. Theological Books
 - D. Books on Christian Living and Believing
 - E. Christian Periodicals
 - F. Group Study
 - G. ECM Publications
 - H. Other Studies

ACTION:

4. If you have had a specific plan for attempting to witness or serve the Lord in some particular area, share one success or disappointment you have experienced through this plan.
5. What unexpected opportunity to witness has the Lord offered you?

CLOSING PRAYER:

We give you thanks, almighty God, for all the benefits you have given us, You who live and reign forever and ever. AMEN