

CURSILLO SCHOOL GROUPS

Lesson Plan # 5

Directions: Have a member of the School Group read this and all members discuss as you go along. Stay on track.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP REUNION

Over the past several weeks we have been discussing various facets of the Cursillo Movement. The first week we discussed the Purpose of the Cursillo Movement - changing our environments to become Christ centered. Last week we looked at Friendship Group Reunion and saw how our holiness and formation leads to evangelization - evangelization which is part of our plan to change our environments. This week we are going to look at a facet of the Cursillo Movement which is rarely studied - Environmental Group Reunion.

What does this term mean? Well, let us look at the pieces of it:

- a. Environmental - this group is part of one of the environments to which we belong.
- b. Group - obviously, this is a gathering of a small number of people within our environment.
- c. Reunion - this environmental group gets together in a reunion of its members on a periodic basis.

In simple terms, then, Environmental Group Reunion is a group of people within one of our environments which gets together periodically with the aim of changing the environment to a Christ centered environment.

Questions:

1. Are you a member of an Environmental Group Reunion? If so, tell the Cursillo School Group about it. If not, do you know of any Cursillista that is a member of an Environmental Group Reunion?
2. Who are usually members of the Environmental Group?

Whenever I think of Group Reunion, I think of Cursillistas. Whenever I studied the Cursillo literature, I thought that an environmental group reunion would consist of a group of Cursillistas within one of my environments. Therefore, if my plan was to Christianize an environment, I would go about it by bringing the leaders of that environment to Cursillo - the 3 days. I was way off base! Our purpose is to Christianize environments, not Cursillo-ize them. It wasn't until a few years ago, that I began to realize that my approach was wrong.

If the environmental group reunion consists of not only Cursillistas, who are the other members? The answer is any Christian or potential convert in that environment. So, our horizons have just been expanded.

If one of my plans is to change my neighborhood environment, maybe I can find out who my Christians neighbors are and start getting together periodically with them to share our faiths - make plans for expressing our faith through Christian evangelization to other residents in the neighborhood by:

- helping the elderly
- baby-sitting for each other
- spending time with the lonely
- giving support in times of family crisis
- putting on the mind of Christ and letting our actions reflect it.

For the environmental group reunion to be effective, it must meet on a regular basis to share the common Christian ideal. One way to do this is by structuring the sharing around the format of the Cursillo Friendship Group. That is by sharing our holiness, formation and evangelization. Another way may be to have a bible study group. However, to be effective, the group must have a plan to evangelize. If the members simply "navel gaze" little will be done to bring the other members of the environment to Christ.

In an office environment, the environmental group may start as a small prayer group - some of co-workers start the day 15 minutes early with prayer, or meet one every Thursday at lunch to discuss the bible. These are simple beginnings which can have a tremendous impact on the other members of that environment. As the group develops, the vision should expand to include the leaders in that environment and lead

them to live a life in grace.

More Questions:

1. Now that you have been given some examples of and Environmental Group Reunion, can you think of how such a group might help in evangelizing one of your environments? Please share your thoughts with the other School Group members.

The same characteristics that pertain to a Friendship Group Reunion should apply to an Environmental Group Reunion:

- Size - three to five people are ideal
- Regularity - set up a consistent time and place to meet
- Seriousness - you are doing the work of Jesus Christ, it is not a game
- Discretion - the art of listening includes the art of silence about what we hear
- Sincerity - authentic relationships can only be built on a foundation of truth

If we take our role as laity seriously, forming environmental group reunions is a natural part of our work in His vineyard. As in all things we do in His name, we must be sure we are authentic.

Where do I start?

Start with prayer. Pray for discernment in forming and choosing the members of your environmental group. Persevere - it will take time for the friendship of the group to develop. Once it has, make a plan to change the environment. Don't fall into the trap of being a group unto itself.

Precautions:

Be attentive. Make sure that your group does not go off on tangents. If the original basis of the group is bible study, make sure that the group you bring together is not salted with Fundamentalists. If fundamentalism surfaces, read the book

"Catholic Answers to Fundamentalist Questions" and be ready to challenge their focus.

You also need to make sure that the environmental group does not get too involved in doing things which distract it from their primary purpose - change the environment to a Christ centered environment.

As your environmental groups develop, consult with other members of the Cursillo community and/or the Secretariat for advice and direction. Link up with other Cursillistas at the Ultreya and in your Friendship Group. Ask them to pray for the success of your efforts leavening your environments.

Final Questions:

1. Is it feasible to start an Environmental Group Reunion in one of your environments? If no, why not?
2. If yes, will you take the time to make a plan?
3. When will you make the plan? - When will you begin?