



A: GOSPEL SHARING

A\3

WE EXPERIENCE 7 STEP GOSPEL SHARING

TOPICS OF ASIPA TEXTS:

A : GOSPEL SHARING (7 steps)

B : SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

C : A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH

D : TRAINING FOR PARISH TEAMS

Imprimatur:

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December 8, 1996

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Distributed by:

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AsIPAA: GOSPEL SHARING
Programmes for Training the Christian Community

A\3

WE EXPERIENCE 7 STEP GOSPEL SHARING

Prepare beforehand

- 7 Step cards for all participants
- Bibles or duplicated text from scripture.

INTRODUCTION

Today we would like to experience the 7 Step Gospel Sharing.

We want to do it well. Therefore we go through each step and remember how it should be done. If we change the steps too quickly we may never experience the spirit behind the 7 Step Gospel Sharing.

A. HOW THE 7 STEPS SHOULD BE DONE

All in the group follow the individual steps on their 7 Step Card while the “summary” of the steps is presented.

Summary:

Step 1:

- The facilitator asks somebody in the group to invite Jesus in a personal and friendly manner. We re-phrase biblical events in which Jesus was invited, for instance by Zaccheus or Martha.

Step 2:

- The facilitator first announces the book in the Bible and the chapter. Then he/she waits until all have found the chapter in the right book.
- Only then does he/she ask somebody in the group to read the verses slowly and prayerfully.

Step 3:

- Each one in our group is invited to pick out a word or a short phrase from the text, read it aloud three times - keeping silence in between the individual repetitions. Usually this is done too quickly by beginners.
- We can choose any word from the text even a word we think is an insignificant one. Therefore we do **NOT** need to hunt for a special word in the text. Any word can be chosen without searching for a long time in the text.

Step 4:

- The facilitator will announce the time of silence, for instance, 3 minutes or 4 minutes. It depends on the group - how much silence they want.
- The facilitator keeps an eye on his/her watch to stick to the time of silence. This will bring inner peace to the group.

Step 5:

- In our “sharing” in this step we do not “preach” at others what they should do or how they should behave.
- In this 5th step we do not “discuss” or “explain” a point as we do in Bible studies. If there is a difficulty in the text which you would like to discuss, please do not do it in step 5. Wait until later. Otherwise we destroy the spirit of prayer and miss the most precious part of gospel sharing: to experience the presence of Christ.
- In step 5, we should like to share how a certain word has touched us personally. Therefore we can begin our sharing with the phrase: “This word... has touched me.”

Or:

“I was struck by this word”...

Step 6:

- In this step we try to find a “task” which we can do together. This task needs not necessarily result from the text itself. It can be, for instance, to organize a birthday party or send some members to a family who are in difficulty.
- In step 6, a group can also choose a “Word of Life” which they agree to remember for the whole month.

[The Word of Life is a word or phrase from the text that the group agrees will be their strength and a reminder as they go

about their daily lives. They will remember it in difficult moments and it will bring them closer to the Lord.]

Step 7:

- At the very end all who wish should have a chance to pray spontaneously.
- We shall end our meeting with a prayer or hymn which we all know by heart.

B. WE DO THE 7 STEP GOSPEL SHARING

- 1. Begin the Gospel Sharing by singing a hymn**
- 2. Text: Matthew 20, 29-34: Jesus heals the blind man.**
- 3. When you have completed all 7 steps, go through the 'Self Evaluation Scheme' given below.**

WHAT THE FACILITATOR SHOULD REMEMBER

1. Just read the steps suggested on the 7-step card.
2. Never do anything which can be done by one of the group.
3. Contribute yourself, in steps 3 to 7. Remember, however, that you should never be the first one to contribute. Allow others to contribute before you.
4. Try not to be the last one either, as some may believe that you are the one now giving the “right answer”.
5. Encourage all participants to take an active part. Do this in a gentle, non-dominating way.

This way of facilitating puts into practice what Jesus commanded his disciples to do, “Whoever wants to be first must place himself/herself last of all and be the servant of all” (Mk9,35).

SELF-EVALUATION SCHEME

STEP 1:

- Was there a spirit of prayer?
- Was there anything which disturbed the spirit of prayer?

STEP 2:

- Did everybody find the text before it was read?

STEP 3:

- Did we allow a good time of silence in between the words which we were picking out?

STEP 4:

- Was the time of silence too short or too long?

STEP 5:

- Was there real personal sharing or “preaching to others”?

STEP 6:

- Did we allow the Spirit of God’s Word to guide our discussions on our task?
- Did everyone get a chance to say what he or she wanted to say?
- Did you feel that some of us talked too long?

STEP 7:

- Did we allow enough time for everybody to pray spontaneously?

THE FACILITATOR:

- What did the facilitator do well?
- What can she/he still improve?

After each gospel sharing, a group can go through the SELF-EVALUATION SCHEME. This will help to correct possible shortcomings and enable you to continually improve.

METHOD OF ASIPA TEXTS

ASIPA TEXTS are compiled for Christian men and women at grass root level of the parish. They can be conducted most fruitfully in Small Christian Communities, Neighbourhood Communities, Parish Pastoral Councils or any other small groups in the parish.

ASIPA TEXTS can also be used with larger groups, e.g. in the parish hall - provided the “participatory method” is maintained in smaller working groups.

Features of the “ASIPA approach”

1. ASIPA TEXTS adopt a **“participatory approach”** in which all participants of a group search and discover for themselves as far as they are able to.
2. The texts are compiled in such a way that the facilitator can use them with a **minimum of preparation**.
3. The facilitator is requested to **follow the text** as closely as possible and allow the participants to contribute when indicated in the text.
4. The facilitator is not content with one answer to a question but he/she encourages as many participants as possible to search for an answer. **“Buzz groups”** of 2/3 are helpful to achieve maximum participation.
5. The **SUPPLEMENT** can help add to the findings of the participants and summarize them.
6. The **SUMMARY** is meant to be used as ‘input’.

ASIPA:

As-ian -I-ntegral -P-astoral -A-pproach

The Asian Bishops declared in the Final Statement of their Fifth Plenary Session in Bandung: The Church of 1990s has to be a "Participatory Church", a "Communion of Communities", a Church that "witnesses to the Risen Lord" (*FABC5,#8*).

The question was, how to promote this "new way of being Church". Therefore, late in 1993, jointly sponsored by the FABC Offices of Human Development and of Laity, a consultation meeting was held in Malaysia. It was during this consultation that the pastoral process for promoting a "Participatory Church" in Asia was termed ASIPA: Asian Integral Pastoral Approach.

ASIPA TEXTS (training programmes) follow this directive:

ASIAN

They want to implement the vision of the Asian Bishops and help Asian Christians face Asian life in the light of the gospel.

INTEGRAL

They aim at achieving a balance between the "spiritual" and the "social", between the individual and the community, between hierarchical leadership and the co-responsibility of the laity.

PASTORAL

They train the laity in their pastoral mission in Church and world.

APPROACH

The process of ASIPA TEXTS can be described as a pastoral approach which is "Christ- and Community centred". It involves the participants of workshops to search for themselves and allows them to experience a "New Way of Being Church."
