

## **A: GOSPEL SHARING**

### **A\7**

## **THE BIBLE-MIRROR METHOD (Group Response)**

### **TOPICS OF AsIPA TEXTS:**

**A : GOSPEL SHARING**

**B : SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**

**C : A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH**

**D : TRAINING FOR PARISH TEAMS**

**Imprimatur:**

+ Joseph Ti-Kang, Archbishop of Taipei,  
December 8, 1996

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AsIPA Desk, FABC  
34, Lane 32, Kuangfu, S.Road,  
Taipei, Taiwan (1052)  
Tel/Fax: [886]- 2-577 2007

ASIPA A: GOSPEL SHARING  
Programmes for Training the Christian Community

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A\7

## **THE BIBLE-MIRROR-METHOD (GROUP RESPONSE)**

### **Aim of the “Bible-Mirror-Method”**

The “Bible-Mirror-Method” helps a group of people to look beyond their immediate personal needs and interests. There is no “personal sharing” as in the 7-step method. There is, however, a common search for God’s will in the face of a difficult public situation in the parish, village, town or country.

The “Bible-Mirror-Method” can also be used for preparing the Sunday liturgy together with a group. It is a practical step towards inculturation because it can make liturgy relevant and meaningful to daily life.

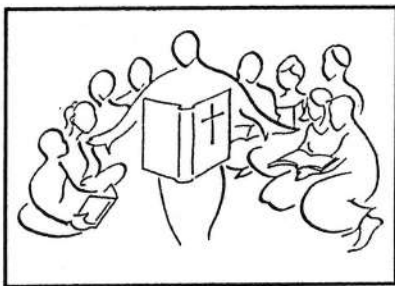
The 7-step method of gospel sharing remains the ordinary and basic method of a gospel sharing group or of a Small Christian Community. The “Bible-Mirror-Method” should be used occasionally only, for example, once a month, depending on whether the previous problem has been solved.

## A. STEPS OF THE "BIBLE-MIRROR-METHOD"

*The participants take turns to read slowly the steps of the "Bible-Mirror-Method". There should be no comment or explanation at this stage:*

### 1. We listen carefully to God's Word

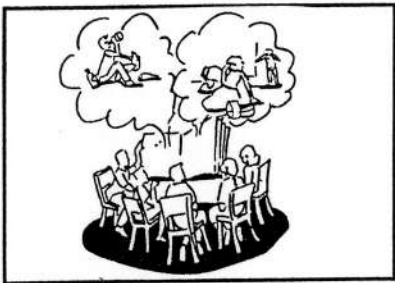
- We invite the Lord in a prayer and welcome him.
- We read the text twice.
- We pick out short phrases, read them aloud three times and keep a pause in between.
- We read the text again.



### 2. We see our own life reflected in the text.

Let us discuss the following question with the person next to us.

We report to the whole group after 3-5 minutes.



- *What life-situation or problem in our parish, village, town or country is similar to the situation mentioned in the text?— (Do not talk about your personal problems!)*

☞ **Report after 3-5 minutes.**

*(After the report:)*

☞ **Choose one problem to discuss further.**

- *Does anyone know more about this problem?*
- *Why do you think we have such a problem?*
- *Who gains or loses if the situation remains as it is?*

### **3. We look at our life-situation with the eyes of God.**

We now imagine ourselves at God's side. We make ourselves one with God and try to look with his eyes at the life situation which we have chosen.

We keep silence for three minutes and ask ourselves:

***'How does God look at our problem?'***

***'What does God think, feel and say about it?'***



*(Perhaps we remember Psalms and other texts from scripture which may have something to do with our life-situation.)*

#### 4. We share on 'God's point of view!'

We tell each other what we think God is saying to us about our problem...



#### 5. We plan in the 'Kingdom Way'.

We ask ourselves:

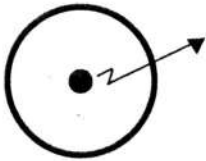
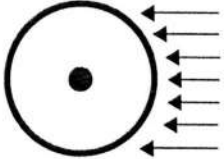
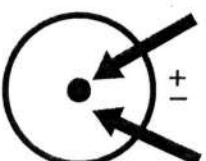
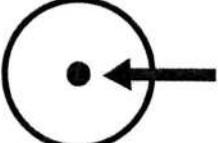


***What does God want us to do?***

**WHO** is doing **WHAT** and **WHEN**?

*(If a group has chosen an important and difficult problem, the action plan should be discussed at a separate meeting.)*

For making an action plan we use the 'Problem solving Scheme' on the following page. A detailed explanation and examples of how to use this Scheme you will find in AsIPA text A\8.

Before you use this Problem solving Scheme you should narrow down a "huge problem" (eg. Unemployment) to a concrete expression or example of this problem. (eg. 'In our street there are some youth without work!')

	<p><b>1 Formulate the Problem</b> Formulate a concrete objective which you can really manage. Write it on newsprint.</p>
	<p><b>2 Suggest many solutions</b> Brainstorming - each member may suggest a solution. No discussion yet!</p>
	<p><b>3 Discuss a few solutions</b> Find advantages and disadvantages of a few solutions. Ask: Which solution is nearest to the mind of Christ?</p>
	<p><b>4 Decide on ONE solution</b> The whole group decides unanimously on <i>one</i> solution.</p>
	<p><b>5 Appoint</b> Who does WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? (Tomorrow? Next week? . . .)</p>
	<p><b>6 Check again later</b> Fix a date when to report back. Change the method - if necessary. Adapt - do not give up.</p>

## B. EXPLANATION OF THE “BIBLE-MIRROR-METHOD”

### STEP 1:

#### We listen carefully to God's Word

- We invite the Lord in a prayer and welcome him.
  - We read the text twice.
  - We pick out short phrases, read them aloud three times and keep a pause in between.
  - We read the text again.
- ☞ Discuss in the whole group:
- Question:*
- *What do we want to achieve by reading the text several times and picking out short phrases?--*



#### Supplement:

- Any Bible sharing method must start with listening to God's word. Therefore we begin the “Bible-Mirror-Method” in the same way as in the 7-steps.
- The repeated reading of the text and the picking out of words help us to become quiet within us and be able to listen with an open heart and mind.
- The words of the text become for us a concrete (sacramental) sign of the Risen Lord in our midst.



**STEP 2:****We see our own life reflected in the text**

☞ *Let us discuss the following question with the person next to us.*

*We report to the whole group after 3-5 minutes.*

- ***What life-situation or problem in our parish, village, town or country is similar to the situation mentioned in the text?— (Do not talk about your personal problems!)***

☞ Report after 3-5 minutes.

*(After the report:)*

☞ Choose one problem to discuss further.

- *Does anyone know more about this problem?*

- *Why do you think we have such a problem?*

- *Who gains or loses if the situation remains as it is?*

**EXAMPLES**, of how some people saw their life reflected in this text:

- “We do not hear the people in our parish who cry for help.”
- “We expect minority language groups in our parish to keep quiet and do not make them feel at home.!”
- “People in power tell us to keep our mouths shut. The more they tell us to keep quiet, the louder we shall demand our rights!”

## WHICH PROBLEM TO CHOOSE FROM THE MANY PROBLEMS MENTIONED?

☞ *Discuss in the whole group:*

### *Question:*

- *What can help us to decide which problem we should choose from the many suggestions? --*



### **Supplement:**

- We look for a problem which is mentioned by several people.
- We search for a problem which touches the lives of many of the members.
- The group chooses **ONLY ONE** problem for immediate action.
- *Let us choose the following problem to be considered further:*  
 “In our parish there is a minority language group. Nobody worries about them. They are like people without a voice.”

## DOES ANYONE KNOW MORE ABOUT THIS PROBLEM?

☞ *Discuss in the whole group:*

### *Question:*

- *Why do we ask ourselves:*  
 “Does anyone know more about this problem?  
 Why do you think we have such a problem?”



### **Supplement:**

- By discussing these questions we gain more insight into the problem. Knowing the background to any problem will help us find effective ways of doing something about the problem.
- In our case, for instance, the people discovered that: The minority language group had settled in the parish because many years back they were called to do work which nobody else wanted to do.
- At this stage we do NOT YET discuss any action. Rather, we search together for “God’s mind” and try to find out what he feels about our situation.

### **STEP 3:**

#### **We look at our life-situation with the eyes of God**

We now imagine ourselves at God’s side. We make ourselves one with God and try to look with his eyes at the life situation which we have chosen.

We keep silence for three minutes and ask ourselves:

*‘How does God look at our problem?’*

*‘What does God think, feel and say about it?’*

**THE DEEPER MEANING OF THIS STEP**

- ☞ *Look at the drawing on the next page.  
Discuss in the whole group.  
Report after 3 minutes.*

**Question:**

- *What has this drawing to do with step 3 of the “Bible Mirror-Method”?--*





### Supplement:

- We step back from our problem and look at it from a distance.
- We “borrow” God’s eyes and try to judge the problem with the mind and heart of God.
- Other scripture texts, especially Psalm verses may come to mind which can help us to look at our problem “with the eyes of God”.
- In this step we do the same as all the prophets have done: They took God’s side and looked at private, religious and political situations with the eyes of God. They tried to read God’s mind and made themselves completely one with him. Therefore they began their message with the words: “It is the Lord who speaks!”
- It is the prophetic task of the People of God to “read the signs of the time” and “judge for yourselves the right thing to do”, as the Lord said (Lk 12,56-57).
- In other words: Our prophetic task is to look at events which happen around us and judge them according to the mind and spirit of God.

**STEP 4:****We share on "God's point of view"**

We tell each other what we think God is saying to us about our problem...

**EXAMPLES:**

- (1) "God showed me how Jesus stood up for those who had no voice in the community, the prostitutes, children and lepers! I hear Jesus saying: Do the same!"
- (2) "I remember the Last Judgement Day. It would be good if Jesus could tell us:  
I was a stranger and you received me in your homes."
- (3) "God showed me that a stranger may be even better than myself. I remembered the Good Samaritan who was also a stranger among the Jews."

**WHEN THERE ARE CONFLICTING VIEWS ABOUT GOD'S OPINION**

☞ *Discuss in the whole group:*

***Question:***

- *What should a group do if different members come to different conclusions about God's opinion? --*



### **Supplement:**

- Discernment of God's will can be a painful process. It can be like "wrestling with God" similar to Jacob's experience with the angel.
- Find out more facts about the problem.
- Pray a long time together about it.
- Discern again later.

### **STEP 5:**

#### **We plan in the "Kingdom Way"**

We ask ourselves:

***What does God want us to do?***

WHO is doing WHAT and WHEN?

*☞ In this step we have to decide:*

- (a) if we can immediately tackle the problem or
- (b) if we should discuss the problem at our next meeting in order to gather more facts and have sufficient time for planning. In this case the group will follow the "Problem solving Scheme" as presented in AsIPA text A\8 at their next meeting.

In each case the group will ask itself:

**"Which solution is nearest to the mind of Christ? What is the 'Kingdom Way' of solving this problem?"**

## C. THE “BIBLE-MIRROR-METHOD” FOR PREPARING THE SUNDAY LITURGY

The “Bible- Mirror- Method” is a practical way of preparing the Sunday liturgy together with a group, be it a liturgical committee or a small Christian community.

It remains important, however, that gospel sharing which follows the Bible-Mirror-Method remains a spiritual event and does not become a mere mechanical method of preparing the liturgy.

The priest and the group assisting in the preparation of the Sunday liturgy will discover the following elements for their preparation:

1. The **theme of the celebration** will emerge from the life-situation which was chosen in step 2.

It can help the preparation team to look for suitable hymns, an appropriate responsorial psalm, gospel acclamation, posters, captions, drama etc.

2. The **topic of the sermon** will be inspired by the needs of the local congregation and will make God’s Word interesting and relevant to life.  
“Listening to the needs of people” was the way Jesus himself used before proclaiming his message.
3. The Bible- Mirror- Method takes the ‘**prophetic role**’ of the lay-faithful seriously.



The answers to their common search: “What does God think and feel about our situation”, will help the preacher to explain the local life situation in the light of the gospel.

4. In this way, the Bible-Mirror-Method **can make the liturgy deeply alive**: The people of God will be able to detect and celebrate their own lives in the liturgy!
5. When this happens,, the process of **continuous ‘inculturation’ and ‘incarnation’** of the message can take place: God’s people allow Christ and his message to penetrate and guide their lives.

## THE DEEPER MEANING OF THIS STEP

- ☞ *Look at the drawing on the next page.  
Discuss in the whole group.  
Report after 3 minutes.*

### **Question:**

- *What has this drawing to do with step 3 of the “Bible Mirror-Method”?--*



# 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."

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