

AsIPA B: Small Christian Communities
Formation for the Christian Community

B\10

PASTORAL VISITING

(Duration of the session about one and a half hours)

1) AIM

To help the participants prepare themselves for visiting their neighbours

2) INTRODUCTION

One of the most powerful pastoral tools we have at our disposal is the simple act of showing we care by making a visit to the families in our neighbourhoods. We would like them to feel that the church and their representative local community care about them. In this session, we would like our participants to understand the value of such visits and obtain some awareness of what is appropriate and what is not.

3) VISITING (20mins)

a) Role-play

You will need 5 people to take on the roles of visitors (2) and family members (3). Two members of the local SCC visit the Fernando family. During the visit, the family shares a problem they are facing. The visitors listen and one of the visitors tries to find a solution to the problem while the other visitor is keen just to listen and find out what is behind the problem.

b) Evaluation of the Role-play in the Whole Group

1. The visitors are asked:
 - How do you feel the visit went?
 - Were you interested in the family? How did you show it?

How did you feel about their situation?

2. The persons visited are asked:
What was good about the visit?
What could have been done better?
Did you feel that the visitors were probing into your personal life?

3. The observers are asked:
If you were to make the same visit, is there anything you might do differently?

You are visiting in the name of Jesus and the church.
It is a great privilege to enter another person's house.

4) SCRIPTURE READING AND REFLECTION (20mins)

Small groups of 2/3

After reading the following text discuss the questions below.

Report after 5 minutes.

John: 10: 1-15

Questions for reflection:

1. *Find out the key expressions in this passage, which depicts the relationship between the good shepherd and the sheep.*
2. *What is the attitude of the hired man?*
3. *Make two columns and write down possible behavior patterns of pastoral visitors, which behaviours are like that of the good shepherd and which are like that of a hired man.*

5) HOW TO CONDUCT VISITS (20mins)

Questions for discussion in small groups:

(Supplement should only be read after the following questions have been answered.)

1. *Is it important to visit people in their homes? Why?*
2. *Do you prefer visiting alone or in pairs? Why?*
3. *Is there anything you could do to prepare for the visit?*

4. *What are the dos and don'ts of visiting?*
5. *How would you help people to find solutions to their problems?*
6. *How would you end a visit?*

Read the following General Principles quietly on your own. Share with the person sitting beside you what you found very important from the points you read:

a) General Principles for Visiting Homes:

- Be positive and friendly. Look into yourself for negative feelings and replace them with joy, love, confidence and appreciation.
- Be courteous. You are a guest in someone else's home. Do not argue.
- Be sensitive. If they are busy, say you will come again.
- Be interested, but not inquisitive. Don't ask too many questions.
- Be a good listener.
- Be unshakable, no matter what you see/hear. These people are loved by Christ.
- Be discreet. Treat as confidential matters of a confidential nature.
- Be genuine. Avoid flattery.
- Help people to find their own solutions to their problems. You can provide data, but let them discover solutions.

Read the following guidelines for a visit with a partner. Share with the person sitting beside you what you found very important from the points you read:

b) Guidelines for Visiting Homes:

1. Preparation for the Visit

- Find out something about the family.
- Be prepared to give information about parish activities/ services.
- Pray with your partner before the visit.

2. During the Visit

- Introduce yourself and state the purpose of your visit.
- Discover people's talents through the conversation and by observation.

- Ask if you may come again before leaving. Pray with the family if they would like to do so.

3. After the Visit

- Write down the details in a notebook.
- If necessary, inform the priest of something he should know.
- Pray for the people you visit.
- Evaluate the visit with your partner using the criteria that we have discussed during this session.

c) Reasons for Visiting: The Four Cs

- CARE: by their regular monthly visits to the families allotted to them, SCC members establish a rapport with them. They listen to their problems in an understanding and empathetic way. They try to find out the needs of the family.
- CULL: every Christian has been given some talents, which could be used to reach out in service. The visiting SCC member has to be a talent scout who helps persons discover their talents; finds ways in which these talents could be used to serve the community and beyond.
- CONTACT: families often complain that the priest or even people of the parish are not visiting them. The fact that someone visits them regularly and takes an interest in them could be pleasing to them.
- CARRY: every month bulletins and invitations could be distributed to families by core group members.

d) DOs and DON'Ts of visiting:

- Have a loving, happy disposition. Say who you are and why you have come.
- Be genuine.
- Be joyful but do not talk more than necessary. Do not preach.
- Love unconditionally.
- Compliment the members of the family. Be interested.
- Be positive.

- Treat as confidential matters of a confidential nature. Be sensitive.
- Be concerned and show concern when there are problems.
- Avoid gossip, probing, flattery.
- Look into yourself for negative feelings and replace them with joy, love, confidence and appreciation. Don't let your mind or eyes wander around, do not be distracted.

6) CONCLUSION

a) Read the following scriptural texts and discuss the questions below.

Luke: 19: 1-10 (visit to Zacchaeus)

Mark: 1: 29-31 (visit to Peter's house)

Luke: 10:38-42 (visit to Martha/Mary)

Luke: 7:36 (visit to a Pharisee)

b) Questions for small group discussion.

- What type of people did Jesus visit and what was the effect of his visit on their lives?
- In what ways can we be like Jesus in our visits?
- What are two points you want to remember for your pastoral visits?

Conclude with a hymn and spontaneous prayer.
