



**The British Anglican Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Council**

<sup>®</sup>Cursillo Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.

# **GROUP REUNION**

*Revised 2018*

**© British Anglican Cursillo Council 2018**

## Introduction

These booklets, which form the Resource Manual or Handbook for British Anglican Cursillo (BAC), are revised versions of the original documents gifted to BAC from the Episcopal Church of the USA in 1989. In the early to mid-2000s and again in 2013/4 They had been revised for basic differences between the American ways of doing things and for language alterations, but it became apparent that the booklets were not being read or used effectively by Diocesan Cursillo.

This major revision and rewording of the booklets was made by a group of experienced Cursillistas in 2017/8 and is intended for use by Diocesan Cursillo in order to explain and guide such groups in the practicalities and use of the Cursillo method. We believe that this reflects best practice.

In line with recent legal requirements there are also attached Guidelines and Policy Documents, particularly in regard to safeguarding, insurance and financial matters.

It is recommended that any future reviews of these booklets refer back to the original documents received from the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA), copies of which should be held by the BAC President.

*February 2018*

1. INTRODUCTION
2. WHAT IS GROUP REUNION
  - 2.1 A brief description of Group Reunion
  - 2.2 The elements of the Group Reunion
  - 2.3 Attitudes in the Group Reunion
  - 2.4 Types of Group Reunion
3. WHY HAVE GROUP REUNION?
4. FORMING THE GROUP
- 5 REUNION OF THE GROUP
  - 5.1 Regularity and frequency of the Group Reunion
  - 5.2 Duration, time and place of the Group Reunion
  - 5.3 Group Reunion card
  - 5.4 Leadership in Group Reunion
  - 5.5 Personal sharing in the Group Reunion
6. THE METHOD OF GROUP REUNION
  - 6.1 Opening prayers
  - 6.2 Piety
  - 6.3 Study
  - 6.4 Apostolic Action
  - 6.5 Closing prayers
7. CONCLUSION

*“Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another.” Hebrews 10. 24-25*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This booklet is intended for:

Christians who have taken part in a Cursillo weekend where the Group Reunion has been recommended to them, have entered into their ‘Fourth Day’ and want to know more about what a Group Reunion has to offer, how it works and why they should bother to join a group.

Christians who are established members of Group Reunion or have some experience of it, to aid a deeper understanding of how it is intended to function, and how it can be most fruitful.

Anyone who wants to know more about this key aspect of the Cursillo movement.

## **WHAT IS GROUP REUNION?**

### **2.1 A brief description of Group Reunion**

‘Group Reunion’ is the term used within the Cursillo movement for short, structured meetings of small groups of Christians. Group members gather regularly in order to share with one another their experience of Christian discipleship in their day-to-day lives. This sharing takes place with honesty and openness in an atmosphere of trust. One of the key benefits of the Group Reunion is that members support and encourage one another with a common goal and purpose to serve and honour Christ.

## 2.2 The elements of the Group Reunion

A group reunion has two elements:

The **Group**: a small number of people (typically numbering three to five) who have committed to using the Group Reunion method.

The **Reunion**: a regular meeting of the group, in order to use the Group Reunion method.

## 2.3 Attitudes in the Group Reunion

Group members should approach the Reunion with an attitude of:

**Sincerity**: each member seeks to build authentic relationships by being open and honest.

**Discretion**: whatever is shared in the group should be kept in confidence.

**Seriousness**: meeting, sharing and planning should be of great importance to each member in fulfilling his/her vocation.

## 2.4 Types of Group Reunion

Within the Cursillo movement, there are three types of Group Reunion:

A **Group Reunion** consisting of a constant small group of Cursillistas.

The **Ultreya** or **Floating Group Reunion** consisting of varying Cursillistas at the Ultreyas.

The **Leaders' Group Reunion** consisting of varying Cursillo leaders at meetings of the Servant Community.

## WHY HAVE GROUP REUNION?

At the heart of Group Reunion is a living experience of life in grace shared with others who seek to live by the same ideal, a realisation of what St Paul (Patron Saint of the Cursillo Movement) meant when he wrote, *"Now you are*

*the body of Christ and individually members of it.” (1 Cor. 12.77)*

As is often said in Cursillo, ‘An isolated Christian is a paralysed Christian.’ Group Reunion can provide the mutual enrichment, support and encouragement we need if we are to persevere in our Christian discipleship in response to God’s call to us to be saints and apostles. By facilitating the sharing of personal experience of seeking to live a Christian life of piety, study and action, it can become a well-spring of transformation for group members and, through them, for the world God loves. In Group Reunion, the Body of Christ is made real to its members as they open their inner selves to one another and grow in mutual, Christ-centred love.

## **FORMING THE GROUP**

A Group will be formed from those with whom we feel we can develop the deepening bond of friendship on which the Group Reunion is founded. The Group will be small enough that it can be a community of openness and trust, and will consist of people who can realistically meet together regularly at a specific time and place. Three to five people is the ideal size for a Group. Friendship is a key aspect in the group. It is not necessary that the people who form the Group are already friends, but those who are willing to affirm and value one another. New Cursillistas should be encouraged into Group Reunion as soon as possible after their Cursillo weekend if they have not already been in a group. Sponsors are responsible for ensuring that new Cursillistas participate fully in the Fourth Day. Sponsors may invite the new Cursillistas to become part of their own Group or give assistance in connecting the Cursillista with an existing Group or in the formation of a new Group.

It should be possible for Group Reunions to change and grow. We will never outgrow our need for group reunion, because we need to share our Christian life deeply with a few people in order to keep it growing. When one grows lukewarm, others encourage and strengthen.

## **REUNION OF THE GROUP**

### **5.1 Regularity and Frequency of the Group Reunion**

‘Regularity is an indispensable condition for maintaining the Group and its atmosphere of friendship and spirituality.’ *Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement 1992*, section 484 on p182

The Group reunion works best when members meet on a regular basis and it fits into the normal rhythm of life. It is intended to be a help towards perseverance. The most important function of the group reunion is to give spiritual dimension to everything in one’s life.

### **5.2 Duration, time and place of the Group Reunion**

A group of three to five people meeting regularly can hold a meeting in no more than 30 to 45 minutes if they are focused on the purpose of the Reunion and follow the method given below.

The time and place of meeting should be fixed to fit the weekly rhythm of life of the members: meeting first thing in the morning in the home of one of the members before going to work may suit one group; another group might meet in a room in the church after the eucharist on a weekday evening; a third group may meet over coffee after taking their young children to school; a fourth group of

people who share a common workplace may meet over lunch.

### **5.3 Group Reunion Card**

The method of Group Reunion is laid out on the Group Reunion Card, reproduced as an Appendix at the end of this booklet. There is also an alternative suggested format for examining in depth the purpose and reasoning behind the group reunion which shows how one element links with another. These are available to download on the BACC website.

Copies of the card are distributed on all Cursillo weekends: they are also available from the BACC resources officer. Using the card helps us to keep focused on the purpose of Group Reunion and is an essential tool in facilitating the sharing of personal experience of seeking to live a Christian life of piety, study and action.

### **5.4 Leadership in the Group Reunion**

The designated leader is responsible for leading the opening and closing prayers and inviting responses from each member to each section.

### **5.5 Personal sharing in the Group Reunion**

A Group reunion is a time for each member to share their response to each section on the card with honesty, integrity and openness. Other members should respect each person's contribution by attentive listening and by allowing one another to speak without interruption.

It is important to remember that Group Reunion is not a discussion group and members should avoid the temptation to digress from the matter in hand—or to engage in any discussion.

## THE METHOD OF GROUP REUNION

### 6.1 Opening Prayers

The Reunion begins with the Invocation of the Holy Spirit. We invite God, through His Spirit, into the heart of our meeting together, that Jesus' words may be fulfilled, *'Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'* (Matthew 18.20)

The Reunion of the Group is not only a gathering of friends, but a sharing together of life in Grace: a living out of 'graced friendship' (a term used often in the writings of the founders of the Cursillo movement.) Christ is in the centre of our encounter with one another.

### 6.2 Piety

*"Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing."* John 15.5

The verse of scripture which opens this section reminds us that true Christian life - life in grace - depends on our being united with Christ. We need constantly to be renewing our relationship with him and receiving spiritual sustenance as we allow his life to flow into ours.

#### 6.2.1 Prayer and Worship

*"Share one thing you feel has nourished your union with Christ since we last met."* For example:

<i>Eucharist</i>	<i>Prayer</i>
<i>Other corporate Worship</i>	<i>Daily Office</i>
<i>Meditation/Reflection</i>	<i>Reconciliation</i>
<i>Retreat/Quiet day</i>	<i>Spiritual Direction</i>

We begin our sharing by focusing on our personal relationship with Christ. Since we last met we may have engaged in prayer and worship in a number of different

ways, some of which are given as examples on the card to remind us of the variety of forms this can take. We are asked not simply to list the services we have attended, the prayers we have said, or whatever but, rather, to focus on one thing we feel has nourished our union with Christ. We share something of ourselves: our inner spiritual life. In so doing, others in the group will get to know us better in the course of time.

### **6.2.1 A Moment close to Christ**

*“Share one moment since we last met when you felt close to Christ.”*

The most important aspect of the reunion is the sharing of our moment closest to Christ. It need not be an emotional event; even being aware of how far we are from God can be a moment most aware of Him. Usually, it is an awareness of Christ in life, nature, adversity, circumstances, prayer, liturgy, meditation, dealing with our family or others, or wherever else it may occur. The most important thing is that we are aware of Christ in all these different circumstances. In this way, we will be able to bring God’s Spirit and His presence into all the aspects of our lives.

### **6.3 Study**

*“Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God - what is good and pleasing to him and is perfect.”*

*Romans 12.2*

These words of St Paul are a challenge to each one of us to devote our minds as well as our hearts and wills in God’s service. Growing in knowledge and understanding of God and his ways is not an optional extra for committed disciples of Christ.

### **6.3.1 Christian Formation**

*“Share something you have learnt from what you have read or experienced since we last met which has deepened your understanding of God’s ways or of your Christian calling.”*

*For example, through:*

*Bible Reading*

*A Book*

*A Sermon*

*A play, film or video*

*Art, music or nature*

*Group study*

*A course or lecture*

*A conversation*

Opportunities for study abound. The list of examples given on the Group Reunion Card illustrates the wide range of ways that we can learn. Regular Bible reading should be a core part of study for all Christians, but there are many additional things we can do. Some of these will be planned, such as going on a course or study day, or being part of a Bible study or home group. Others will “just happen”: our thinking might be stimulated by a chance conversation, but something we see on television, hear on the radio or by watching a film.

Our sharing in this section should focus on helping other members of the group to gain some insight into what we have learnt: in this way the whole group can benefit from what one person has learnt. Rather than saying simply, “I went on a course in Christian healing ministry,” or, “Last week our Bible study group studied the Beatitudes,” try to explain some new insight you gained through your experience of study.

### **6.3.2 Study of Environments**

*“How are you trying to gain more understanding of the groups of people amongst whom you live your daily life so as to be more effective in influencing them with Gospel values?”*

As well as studying to improve our own Christian formation we need to be aware of the people we meet and seek to understand what they believe and how they see the world about them. Our apostolic action is likely to be more effective in transforming the world for Christ and making disciples if we know and understand the people and environments we are working with Christ to transform.

As with Christian Formation, there are many ways we can go about this type of study. Television dramas as well as documentaries can help us to gain insight into contemporary culture. The letters pages of local newspapers can give an indication of the issues that concern people in the community. We can spend time with people and get to know that makes them 'tick'; What motivates them? What are their priorities? What worries, concerns or fears do they have?

Having to respond to this section on the card as we gather in Group Reunion should spur us on to be serious about the need for us to devote time and energy to understanding the world we are called to transform.

## **6.4 Apostolic Action**

*Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you."*

*John 20.21*

Jesus' words to the apostles are addressed also to all who would be his followers. We are to be co-workers with God, sent out to participate in God's mission in the world.

### **6.4.1 Transforming the world for Christ**

*"What steps have you taken since we last met in order to transform one of the environments of your daily life to make it more like Christ would have it be? Does it seem like a success? Or a disappointment?" For example: In home or*

*family life. In your workplace. Amongst friends or neighbours. In the wider community*

Each time we say the Lord's Prayer, we ask that God's kingdom come; that His will be done on earth as in heaven. If we seek to look with God's eyes at our environments - the groups of people with whom we spend our time, at work, in our communities or leisure activities - we will quickly realise that we all fall short of His standards. We are called to use our influence to make these environments more like Christ would have them be: more loving, more compassionate, more just, more peaceful.

We should each aim to have something to share in response to this section each time we meet, as we actively work to bring about positive change in at least one of our environments.

As we tell the story of how we have sought to transform the world for Christ, we are asked also to say how it turned out: does it seem to us like a success or a disappointment? We say how it seems to us: 'An apostolic act of any kind is an effort directed toward changing someone or some place or some thing so that it will be more Christian. If the act is planned and done in the name of Christ, and the ultimate result is as it was intended, then it is an apostolic success.'<sup>9</sup> If we carry out the act and the result was not as intended, it may be a disappointment to us. This is far from saying that the act was not worthwhile: only God knows the ultimate outcome of what we do, and some of those things which, at the time, seemed like disappointments may - in the end - bear much fruit.

We should not be afraid to share our apostolic successes on the grounds that we might be seen to be boasting: as long as we do it with humility, recognising that it is God, not ourselves, who brings transformation, the other members of the group will be inspired by our example.

In the same way, we should not be ashamed to share our disappointments. If we have tried sincerely to do God's work, our commitment even in adversity can encourage others, and sharing our experience with the group can result in an increase in their prayer support for what we are seeking to achieve in God's name.

#### **6.4.2 Making Disciples**

*"How have you planned for or taken an opportunity to bring someone to know Christ, or to know him better?"*

It was said of St Aidan, missionary bishop of Lindisfarne in the seventh century, "Whatever people he met on his walks, whether rich or poor, he stopped and talked with them. If they were heathen, he invited them to accept the mystery of faith; if they were Christians, he strengthened their faith and inspired them by word and deed to live a good life and to be generous to others."

Most of us are in contact with many people who do not know Christ, and even the most committed Christian can know Christ better. It should be part of our planned apostolic action to bring specific people to know Christ or to know him better. Unexpected opportunities may also arise for us to witness to Christ, and we need to develop the ability to be alert to such opportunities and to act on them.

#### **6.4.3 Reviewing your plans**

*"How you carried out the plans you made at our last meeting?"*

With this question, we take stock of where we are and of where God is directing us. Incidents that simply "happen" are not the same as planned apostolic action. To make ourselves mutually accountable for planning and

carrying out apostolic action helps us grow as faithful witnesses for our Lord.

#### **6.4.4 Planning your Apostolic Action**

*“What are the next steps for you to take in your apostolic action?”*

To fail to plan is to plan to fail. Any significant venture needs to have proper planning if it is to come to a successful end. Transforming the world for Christ and making disciples do not usually happen overnight. A process of gradual change, with setbacks as well as signs of progress, is to be expected. Apostolic action is grounded in prayer and in study of the things of God and of the people and situations we long to see changed for the better.

Group members should know which specific situations or people other members of the group are making the focus of their apostolic action at any particular time, and be there in spirit alongside their brothers and sisters as they share their experiences with the group and revise their plans in the light of these experiences.

#### **6.4.5 Working together**

*“Is there something we plan to work on together and with others?”*

When Christians are established in a group reunion, the whole group may have a plan which each member helps in his or her own way to accomplish. This is most likely to be the case for an environmentally based Group Reunion, in which group members have an environment in common such as a workplace or neighbourhood which together they are seeking to transform.

## 6.5 Closing Prayers

*“Whatever you do, in word, or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3.17*

We end the Reunion as we began, with prayer. At this point we respond in prayer to what we have shared together, with thanksgiving for what God has done in and through us in the experiences which have been shared, and for the inspiration, support and encouragement we have received; in intercession we pray for one another, for any who are absent and those who need our prayers. Then we close with the Prayer of Thanksgiving.

## CONCLUSION

The Group Reunion works best when:  
Members are serious about becoming saints and apostles—living out their Christian calling.  
Members focus on their own personal experiences  
Members are committed to regular meetings  
Members are enthusiastic in sharing and prayer and follow the pattern of the Group Reunion properly.

## **APPENDIX**

### **BACC GROUP REUNION CARD**

Gerry Hughes (Ed.) Our Fourth Day p. 31.

The Venerable Bede, The History of the English Church and People, quoted in Robert Atwell, Celebrating the Saints p. 301.

### **APOSTOLIC ACTION**

*Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you"*  
*John 20.21*

#### **Transforming the world for Christ**

What steps have you taken since we last met in order to transform one of the environments of your daily life to make it more like Christ would have it be? Does it seem like a success? Or a disappointment?

For example:

In home or family life, in your workplace amongst friends or neighbours, in the wider community

#### **Making disciples**

How have you planned for or taken an opportunity to bring someone to know Christ, or to know him better?

Reviewing your plans – have you carried out the plans you made at our last meeting?

#### **Planning your Apostolic Action**

What are the next steps for you to take in your apostolic action?

#### **Working together**

Is there something we can plan to work on together and with others?

## **CLOSING PRAYERS**

*“Whatever you do, in word, or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*  
Colossians 3.17

Prayer is offered for:

....one another

....any who are absent

....those who need our prayers

We give you thanks, Almighty God, for all the benefits you have given us: you who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen

© British Anglican Cursillo Council 2003

## **GROUP REUNION CARD**

**CHRIST IS COUNTING  
ON YOU!**

**.....AND I ON HIM!**

Anglican CURSILLO® is a movement of the Church providing a method by which Christians are empowered to grow through prayer, study and action and enabled to share God’s love with everyone.

*®Registered at the U.S. Patent Office*

*“Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another”* Hebrews 10.24-25

Start by deciding who is to lead on this occasion

## OPENING PRAYERS

**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.**

**Almighty God, who taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending them the light of your Holy spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Our Father,....**

We share, review, plan, and ask the support of the group for our life in Christ.

The person leading takes one section at a time, reading out the appropriate words. Each person present is then invited to respond to that section.

### PIETY

*“Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.”* John 15.5

### Prayer and Worship

Share one thing you feel has nourished your union with Christ since we last met.

For example:

Eucharist

Other corporate worship

Meditation/Reflection

Retreat/Quiet Day

Prayer

Daily Office

Reconciliation

Spiritual Direction

## **A Moment close to Christ**

Share one moment since we last met when you felt close to Christ.

### **STUDY**

*“Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.”*

Romans 12.2

## **Christian Formation**

Share something you have learnt from what you have read or experienced since we last met which has deepened your understanding of God’s ways or of your Christian calling.

For example through:

Bible reading

A book

A sermon

A play, film or video

Art, music or nature

Group Study

A course or lecture

A conversation

## **Study of Environments**

How are you trying to gain more understanding of one of the groups of people amongst whom you live your daily life so as to be more effective in influencing them with gospel values?

