

Reliving the Gospel

By reliving the Gospel, we want to re-present the words and actions of Jesus which have been entrusted to us as nourishment and for this reason we have decided to call this part of the meeting « Reliving the Gospel ». It's a sacred space during which the Good News of the Gospels is proclaimed.

There are two parts for « Reliving the Gospel » in Faith and Light:

- During the meeting we re-present the words and actions of Jesus and try to understand his life and his teaching.
- After the meeting we try to re-live our experience of the words and actions of Jesus in our daily lives.

Reliving the Gospel can be difficult. We do not always have time to prepare properly and people do not necessarily know what they are supposed to be doing or who they are meant to be. Sometimes they burst out laughing and it can look as if the whole thing is turning into a joke but however badly things seem to go, something still comes through in terms of the real presence of Jesus in our midst.

In these guidelines we are suggesting that after the welcome, the community divides into three groups, one of which makes itself responsible for “**Reliving the Gospel**”. The following suggestions may be of assistance.

Preparation

1) During the planning meeting

Look at the suggested bible text on the guidelines which introduces the theme for the month. Consider whether or not another text may be more suitable for the community meeting and when a decision has been made ask someone to read the chosen text. Take a little time to think about the text and consider its significance for you personally and for the whole community. How can the inner meaning of the text be conveyed simply but profoundly. Take time to pray about it.

Ask two members of the planning group to be responsible for Reliving the Gospel during the community meeting, taking into account the following.

2) Before the meeting

- Who will be the coordinator for the presentation?
- Who will be reading? (Someone who announces the Gospel with simplicity and conviction). Sometimes there will be no reading during this Gospel mime. The participants will use their own words instead of the biblical text.
- When do we read the Word itself? Before the mime or during the mime?
- Who are the main characters? We will ensure that the persons with intellectual disabilities, but also parents and friends can all be involved. This is a service that is requested, it is not a case of feeling that we have to keep a particular group or a particular individual happy rather of doing what is best for the whole community.
- Who will participate? It is important to try and involve as many people as possible.

It is good to provide some objects, simple signs (A blade for Jesus, candles, a beautiful Bible for the reading...).

3) During the meeting

- The little group in charge of this time will ensure that everybody has calmed down, stressing the importance of what we are going to do. We are going to relive the words and actions of Jesus so that they become our words and actions and we become more and more like Jesus.
- We need to rehearse carefully so that everybody knows what they are going to do and say. Finish with a short time of prayer to ask Jesus to act and speak through us and to give us his heart and his spirit.

The atmosphere

The community coordinator can create a calm atmosphere with a simple and repetitive song. It is important that the room is properly arranged and that the lighting is appropriate. The Bible needs to be in the right place, perhaps with a candle and flowers or an icon...

Bringing the word of God to life

Once everybody is in their place there is a brief introduction and the Gospel text may be read. If the Gospel is to be read during the action, the reader needs to be particularly attentive to ensure that reading and action are in harmony. If, however, things go amiss the reader should not hesitate to make a correction very simply and naturally. A simple refrain or an acclamation such as "Hosannah" or "Alleluia" may be included at appropriate points.

If the group is particularly shy or reticent five or six members could relive the Gospel and then invite the whole community to join in.

In general, members who relive the Gospel do not have much to say- at most a few words. But if the Gospel is being read aloud they need to be attentive in order to ensure harmony between words and action and thus create a peaceful, prayerful atmosphere.

The ending

We usually end with an appropriate song, of thanksgiving, joy, interiority... More often, "reliving the gospel" will be followed by a time of sharing, either among the whole community or in small groups in which we can talk about the meaning of what we have experienced and the way in which it can help us in our daily lives. We can perhaps repeat a gesture which we found particularly moving.
