

A: GOSPEL SHARING

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GOSPEL SHARING ADDS “THE ONE THING NEEDED”

(Step 1 of Gospel Sharing)

TOPICS OF ASIPA TEXTS:

A : GOSPEL SHARING (7 steps)

B : SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

C : A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH

D : TRAINING FOR PARISH TEAMS

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AsIPAA: GOSPEL SHARING
Programmes for Training the Christian Community

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GOSPEL SHARING ADDS “THE ONE THING NEEDED”

(Step 1 of Gospel Sharing)

Prepare Beforehand

- Bibles for all participants (or copied texts)
- Card of the 7 step method of gospel sharing

INTRODUCTION

On a Sunday evening some men and women from the neighbourhood met for a friendly chat in one of their homes. They talked about their work, their family and their involvement in Church activities. One of the women confessed, “I do lots of things and run around all day. Sometimes, however, I feel so tired and empty inside, spiritually too.” Some of the neighbours agreed with her wholeheartedly.

We also agree with her. Therefore, in our meeting today we shall ask ourselves the question:

How can we fill our daily activities with a deeper meaning, how can we grow spiritually in the midst of our daily duties?

A. OUR MANY ACTIVITIES AND THE STORY OF MARTHA AND MARY

1. We read slowly and prayerfully : Luke 10,38-42

- We read the text again from a different version.

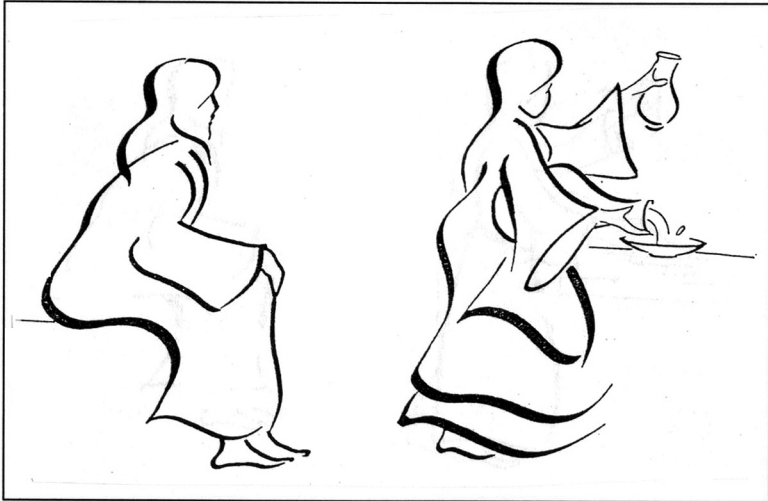
2. Martha and our daily activities

For sure, Jesus did not want to condemn Martha for her hospitality or for making tea for visitors. However, he gave her a clear message to have her priorities right in her activities.

This, of course, is a challenge for us even today, especially for all those who are busy working parents or for those engaged in so many Church activities.

3. We discuss in “Buzz Groups” (groups of 2/3)

- Report after 4 minutes.
- Look at Martha in the drawing



Question:

In what way are we like Martha when we prepare or perform our activities at work, at home or in Church? —

Supplement:

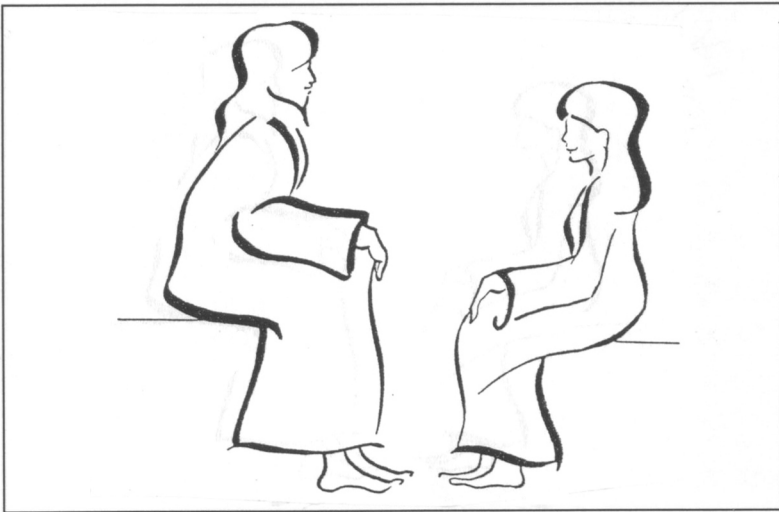
(All read the supplement silently. Then they share on the question, “What other points do we find in the supplement which are additional to our own findings?”)

- We can “run around” Jesus like Martha in council and committee meetings, if we just want to “get on with the job” without asking for spiritual formation and growth for ourselves.
- We “fuss about” Jesus like Martha if we only aim at efficiency in our Church services but forget about the Risen Lord in our midst who wants to be “touched” and experienced.

- We can just “talk about” Jesus in Small Christian Communities, discussion groups and Bible study groups if we ignore his living presence as THE WORD who dwells among us.
- Even our prayers for vocations can sound like Martha’s request, “Lord, tell her to come and help ME in my work”.

4. Mary and the “One Thing Needed” for our activities

Look at Mary sitting close to Jesus. She is listening deeply.



- *Discuss in the whole group:*

Question:

Name different ways in which Mary is “listening” to Jesus. —

Supplement:

(All read the supplement silently. Then they share on the question, “What other points do we find in the supplement which are additional to our own findings?”)

- Mary listens with her whole body and soul:
- *With her ears she hears the sound of the Lord’s words.*
- With her eyes she looks at the one who speaks.
- *With her mouth she drinks in the words coming from his lips.*
- With her heart she accepts the love of Jesus.
- *With body and soul Mary is close to the Lord, completely “present” and “open” to him.*
- The friendship of Jesus and being close to him were Mary’s priority.
- The love of Jesus and how to remain in touch with him became the “one thing needed” for Mary of Bethany.

In all our activities, not only in Church, the “One Thing Needed” is Jesus himself, his presence and friendship.

The question, however, is, how can we sit down with Jesus? How can we listen to him? How can we get in touch with him as Mary did?

Gospel sharing is one of the ways to get in touch with Jesus.

B. GOSPEL SHARING PUTS US IN TOUCH WITH JESUS

- 1. Distribute the 7 Step card.**
- 2. Read all 7 steps without comment.**
- 3. A bird's eye view of steps 1-4 of gospel sharing**

In step 1, we make ourselves aware of the Lord's presence by inviting Jesus as Martha and Mary did.

In step 2, we get in touch with Jesus through his word. The text of scripture becomes for us a concrete sign of his real presence. Behind the many words of the text we discover the face of THE word who became flesh and still dwells among us.

In step 3, we pick out words and short phrases from the text. We read them aloud prayerfully and keep silence in between. It is this step especially which will help us to "settle down" with Jesus and remain in his presence. If this step is done in a hurry, we destroy the experience of the Risen Lord among us.

In step 4, we take one of the words or short phrases and remain with it in a period of silence. We "turn it over" in our hearts. This will help us to remain in close and loving contact with the Lord as Mary of Bethany did. In this way we reach out for the "one thing needed" and have our priorities right.

C. WE PRACTISE “INVITING THE LORD”

1. The facilitator reads from his card:

“WE INVITE THE LORD. Will one or two, please, invite Jesus in a prayer.”

2. Let us listen to an example of how we invite the Lord:

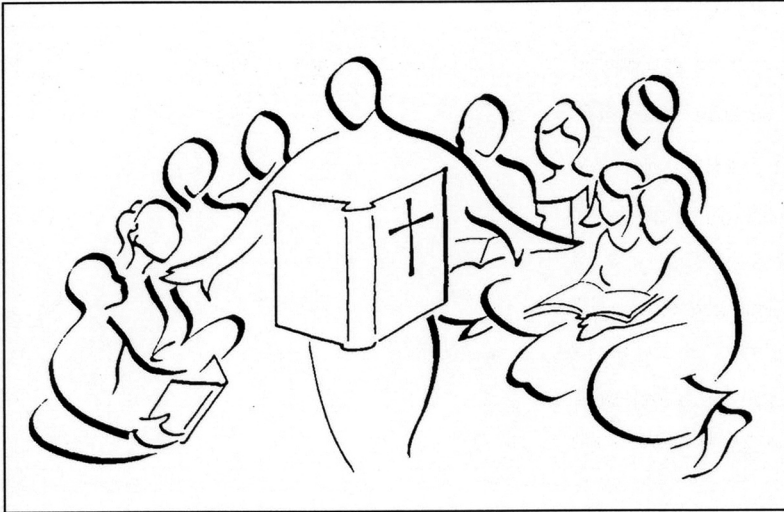
Would someone please read the following text prayerfully:

“Lord Jesus, you gave Zaccheus the strong desire to see you. You answered his desire by inviting yourself to stay in his house that day.
Lord, we too, long for you. We invite you warmly.
Come and stay with us today also. Amen.”

3. Look at our drawing and discuss:

Question:

In what ways can we say that this drawing describes step 1 of gospel sharing? —



Supplement:

(All read the supplement silently. Then they share on the question, “What other points do we find in the supplement which are additional to our own findings?”)

- By inviting Jesus in a prayer we make the Lord present *for us* in our midst.
- The explicit prayer of invitation makes us aware of the presence of Jesus. This presence of Jesus is a reality because we believe that he is risen from the dead.
- Any other prayer, of course, is valuable. In step 1 of gospel sharing, however, we suggest a personal, warm and direct invitation of Jesus. We should invite him as a friend invites a friend, warmly and spontaneously..

- By welcoming Jesus in our midst, the words of the Bible become a concrete sign of Christ's presence and not mere words of information.
- Step 1 of gospel sharing shows us the difference between gospel sharing and Bible studies. In Bible studies we talk "about" Jesus. In gospel sharing we want to come in touch with a living person, the Risen Christ himself, THE WORD who became flesh.

4. Small groups of 2/3 prepare a prayer for step 1

- Small groups read ONE of the following texts.
 - Each group prepares a prayer "inviting the Lord" for step 1 by using words from the particular biblical story.
 - After 10 minutes, each group celebrates its prayer in the whole group which will be, at the same time, the closing prayer of the meeting.
- (1) Luke 24,28-31
[The disciples on the road to Emmaus invite Jesus]
 - (2) Luke 10,38-39
[Jesus is invited by Martha]
 - (3) John 2,1-2
[Jesus is invited to the wedding at Cana]
 - (4) Mark 5,21-24
[Jairus invites Jesus to heal his daughter]
 - (5) Matthew 18,19-20
["Where two or three are together in my name..."]
 - (6) Revelation 3,20
["I stand at the door and knock..."]

PRAYER

All groups celebrate their prayer in the whole group.

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."
