

I will be happy if... I protect God in me and in others

"Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God" (Mt 5:8)

Meaning of the words

heart: for the Jews, the heart indicates the center of feelings, thoughts and intentions of the human person. We can see God through our heart because it summarizes the human being in his or her capacity to love and to be loved.

pure in heart: whoever has, in his/her heart and conscience, the intention to look at God openly and at their brothers and sisters with honesty.

Goal

- To become aware that our relationship with God is a precious good to protect.
- To deepen the concept of purity in human relations and to conduct a lifestyle that respects the dignity and the freedom of the person.

How did it go?

At the start, there is a moment of welcome, wherein it is important to allow space for dialogue and the sharing of what each one has lived, the experiences made, and the difficulties encountered. To welcome means to make each one feel accepted and be at ease: creativity will help us find the best ways. We may recall the aims set at the last meeting: "How did it go?"



Introductory activity

TYPE: Digital photography

TIME: Estimate at least 1 hour; eventually, allow the group enough time to finish the work

MATERIALS: Digital camera or cell phones; posters; colored pens; scissors, printer

PROCEDURE: If needed, divide the group into sub-groups. The ideal number is 5-6 members. Ask the youth to think and take some pictures representing those who are pure in heart and the relationship among them. Print out the pictures, cut them out, and paste on a poster. Ask the youth to find a title to summarize the meaning given to this beatitude. The youth may sign their names on the poster, to indicate their acceptance of the proposed model of purity. An alternative to the print out version can be a PowerPoint presentation. Besides taking the pictures themselves, they can search the Internet for suitable images, phrases or citations.

It's important to emphasize that to be pure and to live purely is not only about our sexuality, but our entire life. It's a way of thinking and living the relationships (with others and with God). It makes us persons who are attentive to our own freedom and dignity as well as that of others.

Once the artwork is done, each group may show the result to the others, giving the reason for the choice of the pictures, the title or eventual sentences/words inserted in the poster/PowerPoint presentation.

CONCLUSION: Allow space for dialogue. Some sample questions: Is there something we have understood through the activity that we want to share to others? What seemed difficult or what gave us joy? What challenges do we face each day to put this beatitude into practice?



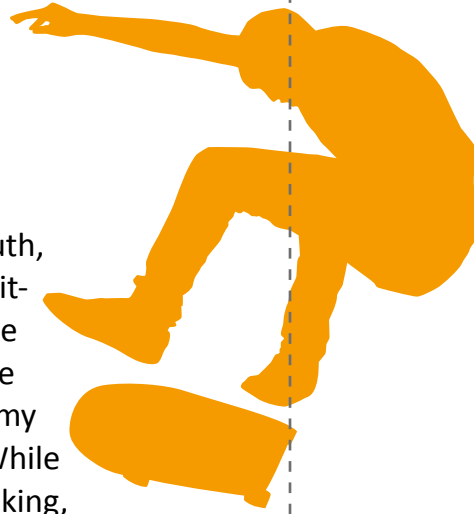
We live this way

At a crossroads

I have always loved freedom very much, which for me is to do what I like. I'm fond of skating and during summer vacation I stay the whole day at the skating rink. The group of friends with whom I skated had split up; they talked badly about others, and the atmosphere changed much. They also began to drink and take drugs. Some drank too much to the point that they weren't able to stand on their skates. Others were always drunk and quarreled with everyone. I haven't started drinking yet but I felt I could not resist for long. One day the mother of one

of these youth, seeing the situation, came to my house to inform my mother. While they were talking, I closed myself in my room. I realized that I was on the wrong track; if I continued this way, I would end up badly. I was at a crossroads and I had to make a choice: to follow these friends or to follow the other friend, God. I decided to leave that environment. To skate is still my preferred hobby, but now I don't allow myself to be conditioned, and I really feel free.

(N. - Holland)



No to the tyrant TV

Teledependence was creeping into my family. Among us siblings, we began to lose interest in others, we quarreled often, had low grades in school, and imitated TV models. Talking it over with our parents, we noticed that the TV had enslaved us and, above all, made us unhappy. Its false messages conditioned us, stifling the love within us. Our parents proposed that we stop watching TV for a month; it seemed the only way to get back a pure heart. We all agreed to put the TV inside a cabinet. At the start, it was not easy because it had become a vice to look at it each

time we were free. But the relationship in our family became more beautiful. We talked more often, walked together, improvised acting, visited friends, invented games, and someone learned how to cook by helping our mother. To be updated, we read newspapers or listened to the radio. Everyone's grades in school improved. When we calculated how long we did not watch TV, we realized that 2 years had passed: we got cured! Now the TV has returned to its former place. Once in a while we turn it on and watch together, but only when there are good shows.

(P. - Brazil)

This happened
to me...



In depth

ENJOYING GOD'S PRESENCE



*Chiara Lubich,
Gen 3 Congress,
The Beatitudes,
June 20, 1975*

If a boy or girl is not sincere in heart, if he or she doesn't place God's interests before their own, if a thousand evil desires fill their hearts, it's evident that they cannot see God. Jesus calls "happy" those who have a heart that is pure, that is, those who maintain their heart full of thoughts of love, mercy, purity, and sincerity, and are detached from things which impede us from following Jesus and the laws of God. Let's look at Mary. She is the creature who was most truly pure of heart; she didn't have any personal interests, she wasn't attached to material things or even to her plans, but only to the will of God.

And now that she is in heaven, not only does she have the highest vision of God, but even during her earthly life God took on human flesh from her, and they lived together in the same house.

In the same way, many saints, many boys and girls who try to keep their hearts pure, clearly feel that God is near to them.

They don't see him with their own eyes, because He is a pure spirit, but they recognize his voice guiding them and his love in everything that happens, even in difficult times, and they experience the joy of his presence. 💎

Note: The video is also available at the website <http://assistentigen3.focolare.org>

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NEVER GIVE UP



In the environment we live in, we often find ourselves in painful situations, with family members or friends who get drunk, smoke, take drugs or belong to gangs. Sometimes they frighten us or make fun of

us because we are not like them; or because we don't have a boyfriend. We find it very hard to go against the current.... Do you have a secret for not giving up? How can we give back to women the dignity that God wants them to have, in our environment in which men still dominate women?

*Chiara Lubich,
Mexico City, June 8,
1997 – Answers to the
community, no. 4*



The secret to living in a world with such attitudes is to live the Ideal, and be one with all the other Gen, and with the whole Movement, which is creating another mentality. If you live this culture, you'll never give up. To give back the dignity to women, I advise you to live the Ideal to become a little Mary of Guadalupe. She's a woman, and yet everyone loves and respects her. 💡



PUTTING GOD BACK IN FASHION

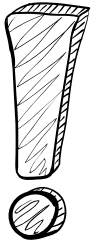


*Chiara Lubich,
Rocca di Papa, March 27, 1976
Gen 3 Boys Leaders Congress*

We must spread our revolution in the world; it is a true revolution, because the whole world is going backwards. Now the latest fashions and fads are all the most ugly things that exist and you know it. We must put God back in style, beauty, purity, all the virtues, make all these things become fashionable - as you have made the beatitudes be in fashion, where there is also the pure of heart.

We need to get help, with Jesus in the midst, to see what you should do in order to make this fashion break through, this new fashion that doesn't exist now, but through the Gen it will exist. 💡

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I will try!

How can we live as “pure in heart” when many things around us (publicity, media...) often show us an opposite lifestyle? By exchanging ideas, let’s look for a commitment to aim at for the next session. Here are some examples:

- 🌀 I will try to dedicate **10’each day for my relationship with God** by reading the Gospel (*), the Word of Life or by just praying. I will write down in a notebook the facts and the experiences by which I felt God’s love for me, and will share these at the next meeting.

(*) Proposed Gospel readings regarding this beatitude:
Lk 11:34-36; Jn 15:1-11; Rm 13:11-14.

- 🌀 I will pay attention in order to “see God” in others and to treat with respect the persons I shall meet.



At what point are we?

To reach a goal, we must practice daily and keep note of the positive changes and the difficulties encountered.

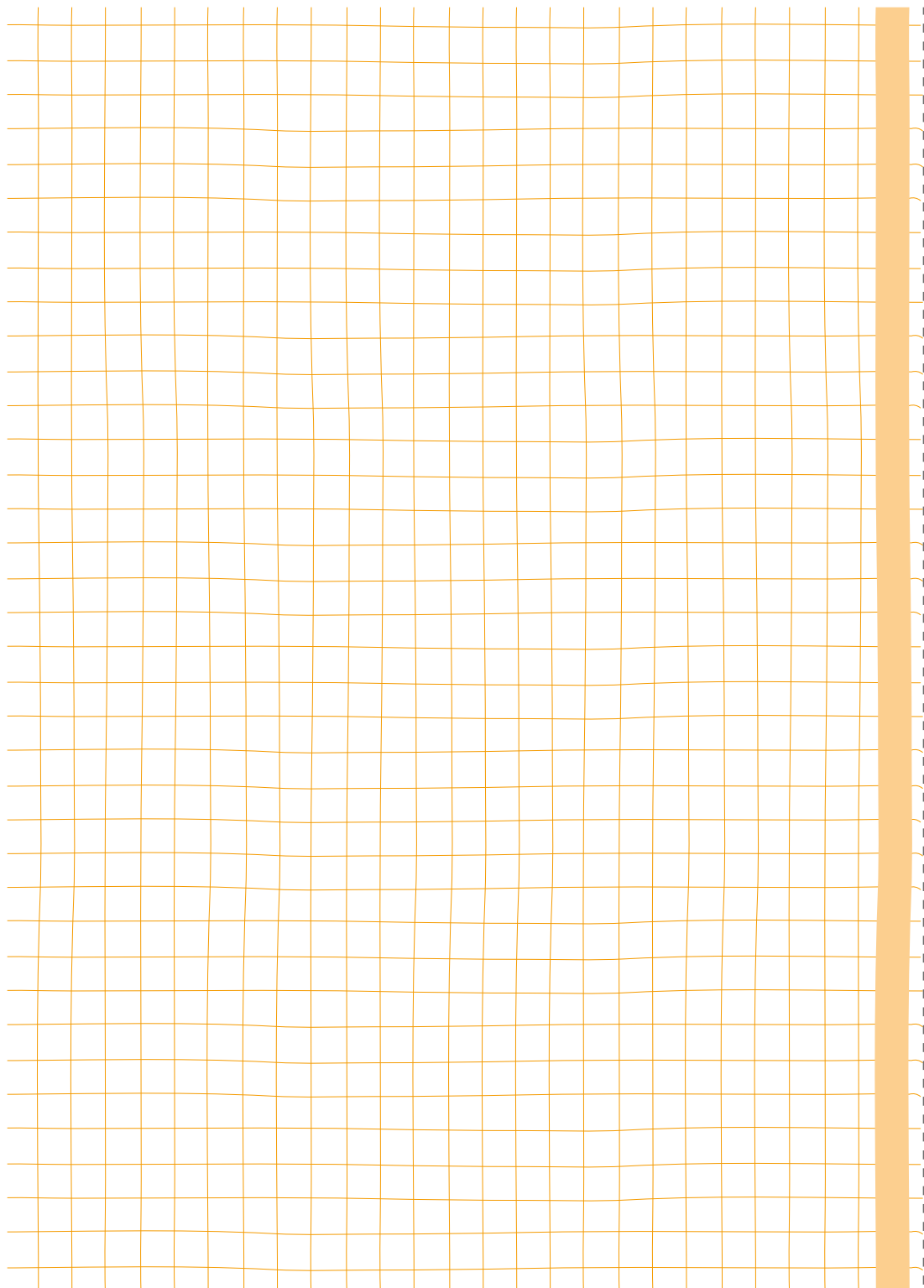
This will help us until the next meeting when we shall allot time for sharing our experiences..

Have I felt God’s presence in my life, his love in what happened to me, his guidance in the challenges I have met?

In what situation?

What was my spiritual condition?

What helped me to feel God’s presence?



For the gen assistant



Evaluation after the meeting

- Has a particular area emerged from the Gen 3 in which they feel it is difficult to practice purity in heart?
- What commitment have they taken to live it? Aim at accompanying and supporting them in their commitment until the next meeting.
- Do I consider the topic finished or is there still something to discuss in the next meeting?
- Did difficulties arise? What must we keep in mind to improve the next time?