

I will be happy if... i make of every obstacle a springboard!

"Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted"
(Mt. 5,4)



Objective

To learn how to recognise that every situation of suffering can be a chance to meet Jesus.



How did you get on?

At the beginning of a new journey, for many after the holidays, it is very important to take time and gather everyone so as to consolidate the 'group'. Make time for dialogue so that everyone can share what they have lived, the experiences they have made, and the difficulties they have faced. Together let us refocus on what gives a thrust to our lives, what 'mission' the Ideal calls us to carry out and what we want to achieve together this year.



Introductory Activity

TO RECOGNIZE SUFFERING

OBJECTIVE: To recognize/acknowledge my own suffering and that of the person beside me

MATERIALS: different 'emotions' (stylised facial expressions) or others images which clearly illustrate feelings and emotions linked to suffering.



FLOW: The young people are divided into groups of 3/5 people, and looking at the images each one is invited to answer the following questions:

- How would you name this emotion?
- When was the last time you experienced this emotion or you used this emotion on social media?
- Are there things or situations that throw you or that make you cross? Have you already asked yourself how you could address them differently?

In a second moment, we collect the images and suggest that everyone mixes so as to form new groups. This time we can answer other questions:

- Which emotion does your image represent?
- Who was the last person in whom you could see this emotion being lived (at home, in school, among your friends)?
- How did you react to the person in that moment?

After everyone has spoken, the dialogue can continue in the group or in a plenary.



We live like this

I had decided to stay away from my family because being with them had become frustrating and tiring. Since I am at boarding school, one weekend I stayed in school rather than going home, even though my room mates were not around, I thought I would find happiness being on my own. At the beginning I was very happy however not even a day went by when I realised that this was not happiness but just a temporary pleasure.

Very soon I began to cry and I was mad with myself because I thought I could do without my family and other people. I did not know how to

deal with loneliness and in the evening before going to sleep I prayed and I fell asleep in tears. The next day I woke up in an empty room and I was overwhelmed once more by a sense of loneliness. Then someone knocked on the door: it was a polite maid who came everyday but whom I had never noticed. Instead at that moment, her presence was very important for me. She



asked me normal things and I replied with joy. It probably did not mean anything to her, because she is always polite, but it meant a lot to me. I felt a gentleness as I spoke to her. From then on, I always greet her with a smile. This experience taught me how important communication with people is for the 'wellbeing' of the human heart.

(T. Serbia)

A boy in my class suffered a lot because of bullying. I was upset to see how much he suffered and I felt I could do nothing. One day I remember the Word of Life which encouraged us to 'include'. I remembered that Jesus was in my classmate who was suffering and I changed my attitude: Instead of being passive I started to help him with the exercises in class and to involve him in other activities. I was glad to see that this helped him to overcome his difficulties with the others. I felt it was Jesus who was urging me to include my classmate.

(R. H. El Salvador)





We live like this

Last summer I went with my family to the Philippines to visit our relatives. While we were with my uncles I began to feel a rash on my skin which then covered my whole body. The temperature was very high and my condition got so much worse that even a little movement gave me great pain.

My mother was very upset to see me in this condition and she tried everything to give me some relief. *In those moments I felt God was beside me and I said to my mum: "At times it is necessary to suffer".* When I went back to New Zealand it took almost two months for me to recover completely. Even today I have scars but what is stronger is the memory of those moments of meeting Jesus Forsaken on the cross.

(R. F. New Zealand)

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Going into depth

We can find the consolation of God in suffering



Even if we don't have much experience in life, we do see that there is a lot of suffering.

A loved one dies, a young boy lies in a hospital bed, there are families without love, an unexpected event forces somebody to give up many things he was dreaming of, there are people who are sad and lonely.

The world tells you to run away from all these people so you won't end up suffering, too. *Jesus, instead, says that these are precisely the happy ones, his favourites, because he himself will comfort them.*

Jesus himself, who was God and wouldn't have had to suffer at all, wanted to suffer, cry and even die to show us how he considers suffering.

And so, we Gen won't be deceived into looking for fun and games at every cost or just the things we like so that we always only enjoy ourselves, because we know that Jesus said, "Woe to you who laugh now, because you shall weep."

In fact, all the joys of this world come to an end, and if we have to suffer without God to comfort us, we might even end up despairing, instead of offering up our suffering like Paolo Chung did, that Gen of Korea who wrote to his mother from the hospital: *«Through this sickness and suffering I feel deep within me that I am very close to God.»* And Cielo, a Gen of Genoa, said *«The world wants nothing to do with suffering. And so, it runs away from it and tries to forget it. And yet suffering is the gateway to true happiness.»* 💡

Chiara Lubich,

*Rocca di papa, June 20, 1975,
Gen 3 Congress, The Beatitudes*



Chiara, you told us that suffering leads us to true happiness. Can you explain why this is so?



Chiara Lubich,
Palaghiaccio di Marino (Rome)
May 25, 2002.
Supercongress
for Youth for
Unity. (Ai Gen3,
1996-2002, pag.
137-138)

It is true. This has been my experience now for many, many years, and all my companions have experienced the same thing.

This is the way it is: Jesus came on earth, that is, the Word of God became flesh, became man, and he came among us. So, he assumed our human nature. He was a man on earth like everyone else, but he didn't only assume human nature. He also took upon himself all the problems connected with human nature: our limits, our faults, our divisions, our sins. He took everything on himself in order to free us, to free us.

Now during the day, whenever we find a suffering, a separation or remorse, we should remember that Jesus took that on himself; so, behind that suffering, we see him, we see his face. So instead of saying: "I don't want suffering..." We say: "Jesus I want you, I love you in this way." And as soon as we say it: bang! It's like a divine alchemy – alchemy means when things change – suffering disappears and there is only love. Naturally, this happens if we keep going ahead... we can't just stay there waiting

to see if something happens or not! We must keep on loving... and we'll realize that the suffering isn't there anymore.

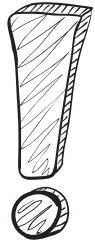
St. Theresa of the Child Jesus was young, in her early twenties, when she was about to leave for heaven. She had that terrible disease, tuberculosis, which meant she spit up blood. When this happened, it was a suffering, the first time she spit up blood, she didn't say: "I spit up blood". She said: "My Spouse has arrived." Beyond that blood she saw Jesus whom she had married when she was still small.

And so, we might wonder: which is the truth? Is it true that she spit up blood or is it true that Jesus was there? They are both true. From the human point of view, certainly, it's blood. From the point of view of our faith, it's Jesus.

Try it; my dear boys and girls, try it; try it and you'll have the proof that if we embrace even the greatest sufferings, love alone will remain in our hearts.



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I will try!

With this beatitude Jesus encourages us to discover that deep happiness which comes from meeting Him and from his consolation. This month I will try :

- To believe that God loves me and that He is even closer to me in moments of suffering
- To develop union with God in the difficult moments entrusting to Him all my suffering
- To turn every obstacle into a springboard so as to love more
- To be sensitive and close to whoever is suffering around me, trying to understand situations from their point of view



How far have we reached?

*In order to **reach a goal**, it is necessary to train every day and to note the positive changes and the difficulties encountered. These questions may help you not to miss out on opportunities to experience the beatitude Jesus promised and to make note of the memories which will help you during the time set aside for sharing experiences.*

Do I feel sad? Why?

Have I managed to build a relationship with Jesus in my suffering?

Have I noticed someone suffering around me?

How have I made myself one with him/her?

For the group leader



Evaluation after the meeting

- What was the atmosphere like? Did we experience the joy of meeting up, a great willingness to listen to one another? Did everyone listen respectfully and share openly? Can we say we experienced the presence of Jesus among us?
- Did the suggested activities encourage an interest in these revolutionary words of Jesus? Were there any difficulties? What might be suggested so as to improve the presentation the next time?
- Did any particular area of suffering emerge? Do we think we have exhausted the topic or do we want to deepen something at the next meeting?
- How can we assistants accompany and support the young people in the proposals taken until the next meeting?