

We will be happy if... we make of every obstacle a springboard!

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



Objective

To be concerned about the difficulties of others, at a local and global level, to be of help and consolation to whoever suffers.



How did it go?

At the beginning there is a moment of welcome in which it is necessary to give space to dialogue and sharing of what each one has lived, of experiences lived and difficulties encountered. To welcome means to make everyone feel at home. Our creativity will help us to find the right way. We can also call to mind the various objectives we had outlined in the previous meeting: How did it go?"



Introductory Activity

FOCUSED ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE: To recognize those suffering around us

MATERIALS: paper, colored pencils

FLOW: Divide the participants in groups of 4 or 5. Each group will draw on a piece of paper an outline made of 3 concentric circles (preferably with different colors). The innermost circle will have as a title "at home/in the family", the second, "at school" and the third "in my city". For every circle, according to the experiences of the members of the group, reflect and dialogue on the following questions:

- Do I know someone in this environment who is suffering?
- What is his /her suffering and what might have caused it?
- What type of help might he/she be needing?





This is how we live

Last year we got to know a very poor family, the two parents and four children.

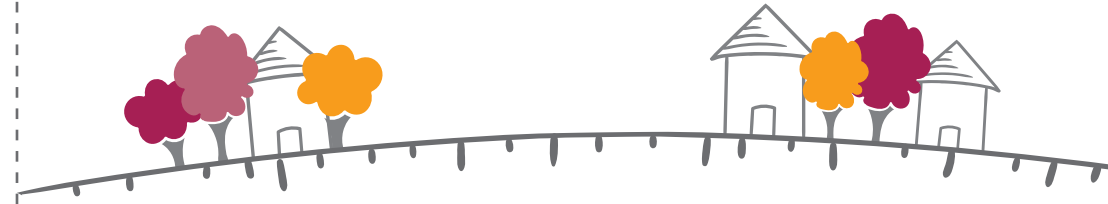
We went to their house and we saw that where they lived was very small. There was only one room without chairs and not even a dining table. The toilet was in an awful condition.

They all slept together on bunkbeds. In the kitchen, the fridgerator was empty and they were used to eating only once or twice a day.

All together in my family, we decided to take care of them so that they could have a more dignified life and the children could grow up in a healthier environment. To be able to help them concretely, my parents told us that we would have to reduce our expenditure.

We started gathering food from our closest relatives. We found a bigger house that could accommodate this family in difficulty but it had to be repaired, so one Saturday, we all went there to clean and repaint the house.

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Together with our friends we asked for providence to furnish the house. Finally, we helped the family to move in. It was very beautiful to see the faces of the children when they discovered the new house... they were very happy. For us it was like receiving the hundredfold: we felt that it was worth it to have made the sacrifice to help them.

With my family we were committed to continuing the relationship with them. We help the children with their studies and we try to get them food so that they have the possibility of eating well. My grandmother is teaching the mother of these children some work which is possible to do at home: this was part of a solidarity project which enabled her to have a little income which helped her husband with the expenses.

This experience left in my heart the certitude that life has meaning only when I help others, especially when I say "Yes" to Jesus.

(S. Costa Rica)

This is how we live

At school, our teacher announced to us that we were to do some voluntary work in an institution for disabled children. When I told my mum about it, I was touched by a comment she made: "These children might seem different from you but remember that Jesus is also present in them".

Together with my friends we decided to take along snacks and prepare a little play, so we chose the fairy tale of the "Three little pigs and the wicked wolf". They asked me to play the part of the wolf. I was very happy to have this opportunity to entertain these children. They loved the play very much!

Then the teacher played some music and encouraged us to dance together. I was the first to take one of the children by the hand and invite him to dance, but it was as though we would be the only ones to dance: my friends were not willing to follow my example. So, I stopped and explained to them that those children were orphans and they hardly ever had any visitors: It was our place to make them happy. My friends understood and so we had a wonderful afternoon with them. I am very happy that I was able to get my friends involved in living for others.

(M. Thailand)

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Going into depth

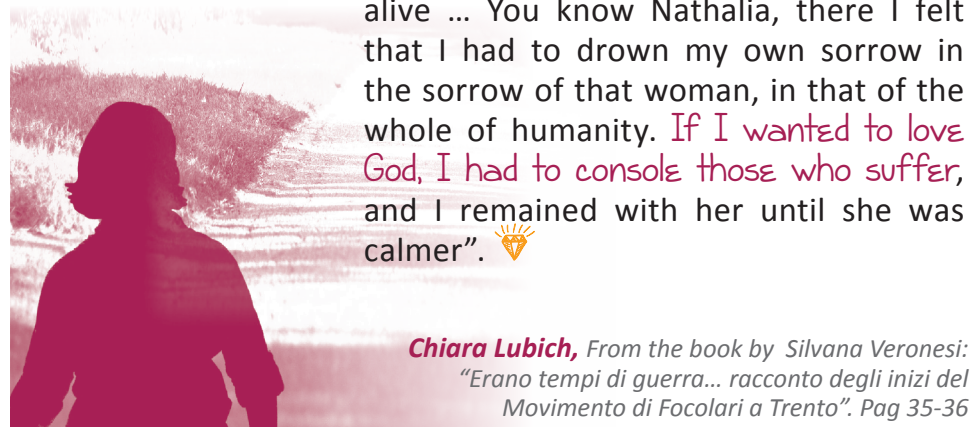
Introduce the experience of Chiara of the 13th of May 1944: after the bombing of the city which made the house unfit to live in, her family was forced to go away and she asked permission to remain in Trent. After she said goodbye to her parents and her sisters, she went back to the city crying, sad because she had to be separated from them.



"I was walking along the Via 3 novembre and the tears kept running down my cheeks but I didn't bother to dry them. I didn't care about anything because God had chosen me and I was going to Him.

While I was walking without even thinking of where I was putting my feet, I felt someone seize my hand, it was a woman who shook me and shouted in my face: four of mine have died Miss! Looking closely, I recognized her: she was one of our neighbors. Her hands were like an iron-grip, maybe she was mad or only desperate: "four of mine have died" she shouted again.

All at once I thought of my own four family members whom I had just left on the way to Civezzano: My own four relatives were alive ... You know Nathalia, there I felt that I had to drown my own sorrow in the sorrow of that woman, in that of the whole of humanity. If I wanted to love God, I had to console those who suffer, and I remained with her until she was calmer". 💡



Chiara Lubich, From the book by Silvana Veronesi: "Erano tempi di guerra... racconto degli inizi del Movimento di Focolari a Trento". Pag 35-36



Know how to cry with others

«Blessed are those who mourn
for they will be comforted»



*Apostolic Exhortation
Gaudete et Exsultate
Pope Francis
paragraphs 75 -76*

The world tells us exactly the opposite: entertainment, pleasure, diversion and escape make for the good life. The worldly person ignores problems of sickness or sorrow in the family or all around him; he averts his gaze. The world has no desire to mourn; it would rather disregard painful situations, cover them up or hide them. Much energy is expended on fleeing from situations of suffering in the belief that reality can be concealed. But the cross can never be absent.

A person who sees things as they truly are and sympathizes with pain and sorrow is capable of touching life's depths and finding authentic happiness. He or she is consoled, not by the world but by Jesus. Such persons are unafraid to share in the suffering of others; they do not flee from painful situations.

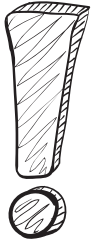


They discover the meaning of life by coming to the aid of those who suffer, understanding their anguish and bringing relief.

They sense that the other is flesh of our flesh, and are not afraid to draw near, even to touch their wounds. They feel compassion for others in such a way that all distance vanishes. In this way they can embrace Saint Paul's exhortation: "Weep with those who weep» (Rom 12,15).

Knowing how to mourn with others: that is holiness. 💡

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We will try!

1. Let us agree together with the gen assistants and the animators for teens for unity, to console those who suffer with our love, maybe in those places that we had pointed out in the introductory activity or we unite ourselves with the activities already going on for the project: *ZeroHunger by the year 2030*.
2. Let us agree to live in a regular way the *communion of goods* among us to bring concrete help to those gen 3 who are in difficulty.
3. Let us share our experiences, outlining the difficulties and fruits, to all the other teens in the world, for example through the Teens magazines (*teens@cittanuova.it*) or the gen 3 centre (*centrogen3f@focolare.org*).



At what point are we?

To **attain a goal** we need to train ourselves every day. Writing a diary could help us reflect on the difficulties we meet and to note the positive changes. It will help us in our commitment until the next meeting when we shall have a moment to share our experiences.

For the group leader



Evaluation after the meeting

- What was the atmosphere like? Did we feel joy in meeting together again, was there a generous reciprocal attention? Did we listen to one another with respect, and was there an openness in sharing? Could we say we experienced the presence of Jesus among us?
- Did the activities we proposed stir interest for these revolutionary words of Jesus? Were there difficulties? What is necessary to take into consideration to do better next time?
- Do we think this topic could be considered concluded or is it necessary to deepen something again in the next meeting?
- Considering the commitment of the whole Movement "Pathway to fraternity" underline the importance of the personal communion of goods.
- We have sorted out/planned occasions where the gen 3 together with the teens for unity and the community, could commit themselves concretely to console those who suffer (maybe in agreement with the commitment "ZeroHunger by the year 2030").