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# Ultreya!

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Catholic Cursillo - Diocese of Knoxville

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## Revision Log

Revision	Comments	Date
0	Initial Issue	October 19, 2003
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## Introduction

This procedure has been written to provide Ultreya Coordinators of the Diocese of Knoxville with guidance on how to conduct an authentic Catholic Cursillo Ultreya. It is not intended to provide all the background information presented in other publications, rather it is meant to be a simple organizational tool to help those who make the Ultreya happen.

## References

While there is no shortage of opinions, memories and fill-in-the-blank forms describing what constitutes an authentic Catholic Cursillo Ultreya, the following three documents are the only ones that were used to prepare this procedure, and should be the only ones used when making decisions regarding how Ultreyas should be conducted.

***Cursillo Leaders' Manual***, (Specifically pages 118 – 130)

***Cursillo Manual, Group Reunion and Ultreya***, (Pages 179-189)

***The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement***, Various Sections

## The Ultreya

There are four major parts to an Ultreya

- Small Group Reunion
- Witness Talk
- Echo Speakers and Spiritual Advisors Reflections on the Witness Talk
- Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament

While Ultreyas have traditionally been scheduled in close proximity of a Mass, the Mass is not a part of the Ultreya. Refreshments and socializing have also become a tradition, but are not a part of the Ultreya. While both of these events are very important, they have purposely been omitted from the Ultreya format so participants will always know what to expect and how long it will take. Offering the opportunity to attend Mass and partake of refreshment or socializing is acceptable if it done outside of the confines of the Ultreya and all participants are aware of this so they do not feel compelled to attend the Mass or socializing.

The amount of work to conduct a successful Ultreya can seem overwhelming at times; therefore no one should try to do it all themselves! A team of three to five volunteers is considered an ideal approach. The team does not have to be the same from Ultreya to Ultreya. The division of labor prevents anyone from becoming overwhelmed, and allows for the training of future Ultreya Coordinators. The ***Ultreya Sign-Up Sheet*** found in this procedure provides a convenient way to divide and track the work that must be accomplished and who will do it. The ***For The Ultreya Leader*** checklist, also found in this procedure can provide a means of making sure all the essential elements of the Ultreya are addressed before, during and after the event.

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## Selection of A Witness Speaker

The single most important aspect of the Ultreya is the Witness Talk. The following guidelines are provided for assistance in selecting a Witness Speaker. Additional information can be found in the documents listed under the **References** section.

- A member of the Laity should give the Witness Talk. The talk should last approximately 10 minutes (15 minutes is the absolute maximum).
- The Witness Talk should reveal what attempts the speaker is making to bring about a transformation of an environment in order for that environment to be more Christian. This talk should awaken a desire amongst all the participants to renew their own efforts at evangelizing their environments.
- Great care should be taken to ensure that the witness talk does not become an instructional session. The talk should encourage by example, not by theory.
- Witness speakers at the Ultreyas give witness to their growth in living union with Christ so that others may be encouraged to go and do likewise.
- Ultreya Witness Talks should expose Cursillistas to a great variety of witnesses so that they may encounter a broad range of possibilities for Christian growth and action. The speaker offers concrete examples of how to live what is fundamental for being a Christian in family, neighborhood, and work place and/or with friends. It is sharing in a practical way that should inspire imitation.
- The speaker should keep the witness talk short, simple and enthusiastic. It should be so balanced that it is not:
  - (a) an emotional high (shouldn't be all feelings);
  - (b) a tale of extraordinary event (people can better relate to God working in the ordinary circumstances of life),
  - (c) irrelevant to life (keep it down to earth),
  - (d) a propaganda message for his or her own favorite cause or organization, or
  - (e) an outpouring of personal troubles that ends in a call for help.
- The person giving a Witness Talk should be one who is living the truth to which he or she is going to witness. When a person talks about what he or she is living, it is almost always told well. When the Ultreya leaders seek out those who are living the life in grace instead of seeking orators, we will get holy testimony and not oratory. (*"When I came to you, I did not come proclaiming God's testimony with any particular eloquence."* 1 Cor. 2:1).

When a Witness Speaker is selected, they should be given a copy of the **Witness Speaker Guidelines** form found in the procedure with the Ultreya and contact information completed. It may be a good idea to place a reminder / encouragement phone call to the Witness Speaker a day or so in advance of the Ultreya.

Every effort should be made to obtain a copy or written summary of the Witness Talk in advance of the Ultreya. This should be provided to the Spiritual Advisor so that he or she can prepare their comments in advance of the Ultreya. If possible, a copy of the Witness Talk should be provided to the Echo speakers so they can prepare their summaries in advance, also. The idea is not for them to revise or correct the talk, but to reflect on it and prepare commentary.

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## General Schedule

The following schedule is based on an Ultreya that starts at 7:30 pm. Please notice that there are two parts: **Preparation for the Ultreya** and **The Ultreya**.

### Preparation for the Ultreya

Time	Duration	Activity
7:00	30 min	Meeting of Ultreya Leaders Prayer Setup (See Checklist) Meet, Greet and Seat.

### Ultreya Schedule

Time	Duration	Activity
7:30	20 min	Gathering Song (optional) Opening Prayer from the Ultreya Group Reunion Cards Group Reunion (Groups of 3 or 4) If a Spiritual Advisor is available, Spiritual Direction or Reconciliation may be offered at this time. Let the Groups know when they have 5 minutes left so they can wrap up
7:50	10 min.	A short song may be sung while the chairs are being rearranged from Reunion Groups to one large group to listen to the speaker.
8:00	15 min.	Witness Talk
8:15	5 min.	Two short (1-2 minute) Echo's on the Witness Talk.
8:20	5 min.	Spiritual Advisors Summation.
8:25	5 min.	Closing Song (optional) Community Announcements Prayer before Blessed Sacrament (if possible)
8:30		Ultreya Ends

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## Witness Speaker Guidelines

Thank you for responding "Yes" to the call to be an Ultreya Witness Speaker. You have been chosen prayerfully, so trust in our prayer and palanca as you prepare.

Here is some information about the Ultreya

<b>When</b>	<b>Date</b>	_____	<b>Time</b>	_____
<b>Location</b>	_____			
<b>For More Information</b>	<b>Name</b>	_____	<b>Phone</b>	_____
	<b>e-mail</b>	_____		

Open your talk with a prayer.

These thoughts may be helpful to you as you begin to prepare your witness.

- Reflect on your growing union with Christ.
- Reflect on your growing knowledge of Christ.
- Reflect on bringing others to know Christ, or the changing of circumstance so that Christ is better known, loved and served.

It is good to focus on a single event or series of events. A simple explanation of how Christ has chosen to work through you or with your group to be the leaven in a particular environment will strengthen and encourage others. Choose one or two passages from scripture that help illustrate what you plan to say.

Remember - extraordinary happenings are infrequent, no one demands that you tell of a spectacular or astonishing event. Just relax and be yourself! The people who attend Ultreyas are there to be encouraged in their own evangelization efforts. *Simple, everyday examples that others can put into practice are the elements of a good witness talk.*

As you prepare your Witness Talk, please avoid the following:

- An emotional high (shouldn't be all feelings)
- A tale of extraordinary events (people can better relate to God working in the ordinary circumstances of life)
- Irrelevant to life (keep it down to earth)
- A propaganda message for your own favorite cause or organization
- An outpouring of personal troubles that ends in a call for help.

Plan your talk so that it lasts about **ten** minutes.

Should you find preparing your talk difficult, you may wish to seek the council of a Spiritual Director or advice from a friend or the contact person listed above.

Think of it in these simple terms: Witness to ordinary people living ordinary lives and evangelizing in ordinary ways, who need to know that sometimes we are successful and other times we are not. When we are, how can we give glory to God! When we're not, how can we pick ourselves up and keep going! Perhaps writing one question at the top of a clean sheet of paper and answering it in your own words would be a great way to get started!

The Spanish word "Ultreya" means "Onward!" Your witness will encourage others to persevere in their own efforts to spread God's kingdom and bring others to Christ.

May the Lord bless and inspire you. Allow yourself to be lead by the Holy Spirit. God does not always call the qualified, but God always qualify the called!

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## Ultreya Leadership Checklist

### ***Before the night of the Ultreya***

- Pray and offer Palanca for the success of the Ultreya and for the Witness Speaker!.
- Reserve the meeting place.
- Review the ***Ultreya Sign-Up Sheet*** and contact the Ultreya Team members to remind them of the role they will be facilitating.
- Secure the Witness Speaker and provide them a copy of “***Witness Speaker Guidelines.***”
- Secure the Two Echo’s for the Witness Speaker and provide them with a copy of the Witness Talk (if possible). Let them know that their role is to affirm the message with one or two brief examples from their own lives.
- Secure the Spiritual Advisor and provide him or her with a copy of the Witness Talk (if possible).

### ***The night of the Ultreya***

- Arrange seating in several small groups of 3 – 4 chairs.
- Put out Attendance Sheet.
- Put out songbooks or setup CD / Tape Player (optional).
- Put out Donation Dish.
- Put out Group Reunion Cards.
- Assure that thanks are extended to the Witness Speaker, the Spiritual Advisor, the Echo Speakers and all those who helped with the Ultreya.
- Assure the meeting place is cleaned-up after the Ultreya.

### ***After the Ultreya***

- Assure that thanks are extended to the owners of the meeting place.
- Assure that proper reserves of Group Reunion Cards and other resources are maintained.
- Continue to seek volunteers to serve on the Ultreya Team and list their names on the ***Ultreya Team Sign-Up Sheet.***



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## Ultreya Group Reunion Format

The following is based on the resources provided by the Cursillo Movement. Every effort should be made to provide the Ultreya Group Reunion Cards to the participants.

Please note that the following is the format for the Group Reunion and not questions or topics decided on by the Ultreya Coordinator.

### Opening Prayer: Prayer to the Holy Spirit

LORD JESUS CHRIST, I, \_\_\_\_\_, and my companions want to live in Your friendship and in Your Grace. Do not permit us to turn away from You!

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created; and You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolations. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be

### Ultreya Small Group Sharing

#### **Piety**

- What was the most help to my spiritual growth this week and why?
- When was I most aware of Christ's presence and why?

#### **Study**

- How was my mentality changed to be more Christian?

#### **Action**

- What did I do to bring about change in others and/or the world for the better?

#### **Closing Prayer**

We give your thanks almighty God, for all the benefits you have given us. You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Say an Our Father for those who have not fulfilled their quota of commitments.

Say a Hail Mary.

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## An Essay on the Ultreya

Mary Beth Feldhaus presented the following Witness Talk during the School of Leaders session dedicated to exploring Ultreya. It is reprinted here to serve as a reflection on the true meaning of the Ultreya.

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Please join me in the prayer to the Holy Spirit. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of us Your faithful and kindle in us the fire of Your love. Send forth Your spirit and we shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. Lets us pray. O God who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant, that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

"It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you to **go forth** and bear fruit." (John 15:16) As many of us know, the Spanish word, Ultreya, means, "onward", "keep going", or "go forth". It was the rallying cry of the pilgrims to the Shrine of St. James of Compostella as they climbed the mountain. As the early founders of the Cursillo movement tried to answer several questions, the Ultreya was born as the last addition to the Fourth Day to take the community onward. The questions asked by the founders were: What can we do to keep groups from feeling isolated? What can we do to help groups stay true to their mission of evangelizing environments and avoid the pitfall of turning inward? How can we help people find groups? So the Ultreya was initiated to form a larger community of friendship group reunions and provide for the good of that community. It is a place for us to receive nourishment for spiritual growth and evangelization. It still provides the answers to the questions that our founders asked.

Today I am going to talk about Ultreya and the importance it has in keeping Cursillo focused on evangelization. I have already told you about its history, so I will talk about its components, what makes a good Ultreya, and how Ultreyas have challenged me.

The Ultreya was not formed as a substitute for group reunion. It was also not formed to be an interfaith experience. All Ultreyas should be complimentary to the ecclesial communities from which they spring.

In planning an Ultreya, several things should be kept in mind. Ultreyas should be short and simple. Because of our busy schedules, Ultreyas should be predictable in length and should not take up a whole morning, afternoon, or evening. Ultreyas should be habitual, but not mechanical. Ultreyas should be prepared, not just happen. A good Ultreya comes from good prayer, palanca, and preparation. In fact, Ultreyas should be prepared as well as the Cursillo weekends. Ultreyas should be available on a weekly basis. Cursillistas are not expected to attend weekly Ultreyas, but are given a choice of Ultreyas to meet time schedules. It is much like the concept of daily Mass. Mass is offered daily, but we are not required to go.

A team of 3-5 people should plan Ultreyas. With a team approach, there are more Cursillistas to share the workload, to listen in Ultreya reunion groups for possible witness talks, and to help new Cursillistas find reunion groups.

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The National Cursillo organization suggests a simple format in the leader's guide with six components. They are: 1) opening prayer, 2) Ultreya group reunion, 3) witness talk, 4) comments from Cursillistas, 5) spiritual advisor's summation, and 6) closing prayer/visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

The opening prayer starts every Ultreya, just like anything associated with the Cursillo movement. We invoke the Holy Spirit. Next is the Ultreya group reunion, which should last about 20 minutes. Cursillistas should meet with persons other than those with whom they group regularly. Ultreya leaders should also be in different groups for three reasons. First, to listen for possible future witness talks. Second, their presence in different groups helps with time management and prevents one person from taking all of the time or from rambling. Third, Ultreyas leaders should be listening for Cursillistas who need encouraging. The Ultreya group reunion should start with the prayer to the Holy Spirit and address four questions. What was the most help to my spiritual growth this week and why? When was I most aware of Christ's presence and why? How was my mentality changed to be more Christian? What did I do to bring about change in others and/or the world for the better? The Ultreya group reunion should end with a prayer of thanksgiving or the Lord's Prayer.

The next component of the Ultreya is the witness talk, which should also start in prayer. It should be a witness as to how the speaker has made a conscientious effort to bring Christ into some aspect of his/her life. It should share the speaker's growing union with Christ, growing knowledge of Christ, and how the speaker is bringing others to Christ. It should make us think that evangelization is a natural thing. Generally, the talk should last from ten to fifteen minutes. There are three levels of witness talks. We can call them basic, typical, and evangelization of environments. Basic witness talks are usually given by new Cursillistas. These talks focus on where the speaker was, where they are now, and how they got there. These talks help introduce new Cursillistas to the community and remind community members about their own experiences. The next level of talk is the typical talk. It shows a Cursillista who is trying to balance holiness, formation, and evangelization. Usually, the evangelization is of a personal nature rather than an environment. The third level of witness talk is the evangelization of an environment. This talk includes the process of forming an environmental group reunion. Witness talks should come from all three levels.

The witness talk is followed by comments from two Cursillistas who have already previewed the witness talk. These comments should tell how the talk has encouraged the Cursillista to try something. Both comments combined should be no more than five minutes. The Spiritual Advisor's Summation should follow and must be given by a priest, deacon, or vowed religious. If there is no priest, deacon, or vowed religious available, there should be no Spiritual Advisor's summation. The priest, deacon, or vowed religious does not have to be a Cursillista. The summation builds on the comments by the Cursillistas and relates both the witness talk and comments to scripture. The Spiritual Advisor should also preview the witness talk in order to prepare scripture references. These comments should also last no more than five minutes.

The final event of an Ultreya should be a closing prayer and visit to the Blessed Sacrament. As an Ultreya begins with prayer, so it should end with prayer, even if not

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in front of the Blessed Sacrament. The suggested time for this prayer is about ten minutes.

If you add all of the suggested times, the total time for an Ultreya, including moving chairs around after the group reunion is close to one hour. By limiting the Ultreya to a specified time, Cursillistas are better able to plan to attend and will be more willing to come back. It is still OK to have a social gathering before or after the Ultreya, but by making it optional, Cursillistas who can only stay for the Ultreya are then able to participate.

The success of an Ultreya is not measured in numbers. Success means that environments are being won for Christ. The Ultreya should be available for whomever the Lord sends whenever he sends them. So, who should attend Ultreyas? Certainly, new Cursillistas should come. Sometimes it helps them find a reunion group. Anyone who is interested in making a Cursillo can come. The Ultreya can help introduce them to the important aspects of the fourth day and the Cursillo movement itself. Our goal should be to prepare our Ultreyas so that all Cursillistas will want to come.

Earlier, I stated that a good Ultreya comes from prayer, palanca, and preparation. Who prays for the Ultreya? We would not hold a Cursillo weekend without the support of prayer and palanca. What would happen if the Fourth Day community prayed as fervently for Ultreyas as they did for weekends? What about having someone in the chapel praying during the witness talk? Remember, "all things in moderation except prayer".

So, how has Ultreya affected my Fourth Day? Although I made my Cursillo sixteen years ago, my first experience of Ultreya was at Our Lady of Fatima. It was difficult to drive to Alcoa after working all day, but Butch and I managed to attend before Ultreyas were held in the south. Our first southern Ultreyas were very long, much more than an hour. I didn't mind this at first, but it slowly started to bother me. What also bothered me was the lack of a witness talk, which was sometimes replaced by a reading from a book. I remember one Christmas reading that was from a book by a mystic. It was interesting the first time, but when it was read the next year, I couldn't focus on it. It did not challenge my evangelization efforts.

In the past five weeks, I have attended four Ultreyas. Two were in Cleveland and two in Kentucky. The last Ultreya in Cleveland was the most memorable of the four. Collette Killebrew gave the witness talk. She talked about several evangelization efforts she had made and how they revolved around her wedding anniversary. What struck me most was that her evangelization was in a very natural and gentle way. It reminded me that I too can evangelize my world in a way that is natural to me. It challenged my reluctance to God's call for evangelization.

The charism of Cursillo is evangelization. The Ultreya offers us a means to continue onward with our plans of evangelization as a form of nourishment for our spiritual growth. It unifies the community and prevents reunion groups from becoming inwardly focused. Let me challenge you with the quote from John 15:16, "It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you to **Ultreya** and bear fruit."