

Pinwheels: A Workshop on Communications

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Facilitator's Preparatory Notes:

1. Opening Prayer: Select two leaders of prayer.
2. Pens on the tables for each participant.
3. Tools: Place in a baggie in the center of the table the following items: a square, coloured page of paper (Origami paper works well), a pin, a tiny square (a mini coaster), and two beads each or a ring cut from a plastic drinking straw. There should be one of each for each participant, i.e. a table of eight persons will have a baggie containing these small items plus eight branches (I used dogwood) tied together
4. Part Four: Be prepared to exaggerate body language to make the point about non-verbal communication and relax the participants.

Opening Prayer

Leader1: "For where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there among them." (Matthew 18:20)

Leader 2: Lord, as we prepare to begin our workshop, we recall Your promise to be present when two or three are gathered in Your name. We know that without You here among us, and within each one of us, we will labour in vain.

All: Unite us, Lord, in Your Spirit.

L1: We rejoice that we are blessed and called together to work in Your name. We pray that we will respond generously to this opportunity to serve You and that we will grow in our Christian calling.

All: Unite us, Lord, in Your Spirit.

L2: Inspire us with Your Spirit of wisdom; plant seeds of Your vision in our hearts and minds; give us humour and humility as we work with one another, so that we may know the privilege of participating in the coming about of Your kingdom.

All: Unite us, Lord, in Your Spirit.

L1: We ask that working together will increase the communion among us as members of Your body on earth. May the communion we experience give us new courage in all that we do for You.

All: Unite us, Lord, in Your Spirit.

L2: Grant us the willingness to be open to each other, to respect each other, to listen to each other, to be honest with each other and to be supportive of each other for the sake of Your kingdom.

All: Unite us, Lord in Your Spirit.

L1: May the true business of this workshop be our spiritual transformation and the transformation of others through us. We ask this as we begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

(Adapted from *Prayers for the Servants of God*, Edward M. Hays, Forest of Peace Publishing, Inc., Levenworth, 1980)

Greetings and Introduction

Good morning friends! It is my joy to be with you today.

The topic for this workshop is communications in the League, under the title of "Welcome, Friend!" I figured we needed to have a little fun and perhaps cement a few ideas at the same time...and so we begin.

Let's brainstorm for a minute: When you think of communications under this "Welcome, friend!" title, what springs to your mind?

This is critical for the future, if we are to market the League well.

- We need to be are equipped with the proper communication tools to do a good job.
- National council has spent a significant amount of money on a marketing strategy.
- What do we have to sell? Any ideas? Faith, fun & fulfillment?
- How can we promote these treasures to our sisters in faith?

This is where the communications standing committee springs into action!

So, what is communication?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the word communication as "a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior".

Communication

- is a marvelous gift for all human relationships
- enables us to speak words of caring to one another
- allows us to share thoughts and experiences with others
- exchange information

Part One: Invitation

On your tables you will find your **tools**.

1. Please take one coloured paper each.
2. Fold the paper diagonally and press the crease.
3. Open up the paper and fold it diagonally the opposite way.
4. Open up the paper again; you are now looking at 4 triangles.
5. Turn the paper over, coloured side down
6. Line the paper up with one fold pointing straight out from you, almost as if it is going straight from your heart.

Now listen: I am going to repeat what I just said to you.

Communication

- is a marvelous gift for all human relationships
- enables us to speak words of caring to one another
- allows us to share thoughts and experiences with others
- exchange information

I want you to think way back, to when you joined The Catholic Women's League of Canada. Who was it that **invited** you IN? Who **reached out** her hand in welcome to you? Who **took you** to your first meeting or said, "Let's go, I'll meet you there"?

Who said, "**Welcome, friend!**" to you? I will give you one minute. Write that person's name down to the left of the top fold.

Part Two: A Mary Moment

Now please rotate your paper around so once again the next fold is pointing straight to and from your heart:

OK, Let's think about something:

Communication is a **two way street**

- Each person has an equal chance to reach the other to make certain that everything said or done is understood clearly.
- It flows back and forth from one to the other.
- It begins with feeling and sensitivity.
- We cannot assume that just saying something makes it clear.
- We must listen, really listen to the words and the feelings behind the words so the person's message gets through.

I would like you to think about **Mary, the mother of Jesus**. What incident of her story **resonates most** in your heart? Could it be the annunciation? The fact that she was an unwed mother? How about when she lost her son, can you find a

parallel with Mary there? When does Mary say, “**Welcome, friend!**” to you? What Mary experience most touches your heart?

Close your eyes and think of Mary and you for just a moment. I will tell you when the minute is up.

It’s time to open your eyes. In your **walk with Mary, where** were you and she? I wonder why this incident speaks to you? Turn to the person on one side of you and share your story. And you listen to her story. I will give you two minutes.

Please write that **Mary moment** down the left side of the top fold coming out and going back into your heart.

Part Three: Interaction

Rotate your paper again to the next fold pointing straight out from you heart.

Communication is **interaction**. It is

- What we **mean** to say
- What we **actually** say
 - What the other person **hears**
 - What the other person **thinks** she hears
- What the other person **actually** says
- What we **think** the other person said
- What we do: Is it **authentic**? Does it jive with what we say?

Now I’d like you to think of **someone to whom** you could say “**Welcome, friend!**” By saying this to this person, could the world get to be a better place for that one particular person? Think about whom you might be able to reach out to. It can be someone in your family, on your street, in your parish, in our country, in our world. Who needs to hear the words “**Welcome, friend!**” from your heart?

I will give you one minute.

Now turn to the person on your other side and share your ideas.

Write this name down the left side of the fold flowing out from your heart.

Part Four: Sending and Receiving

Now rotate your paper one last time.

Communication is **non-verbal** and includes

- Eye contact
- Manner of speech
- Gestures
- Posture - body language

* drum fingers, twiddle thumbs, fidget, yawn, slouch, look bored, fold arms, role your eyes, fiddle with pages, read, whisper ...

These are all means of communication.

How does body language speak to you? Let's try:

Also, **inflections of voice** detect biases and prejudices, for instance:

I NEVER SAID YOU STOLE THE MONEY.

I **NEVER** SAID YOU STOLE THE MONEY.

I NEVER **SAID** YOU STOLE THE MONEY.

I NEVER SAID **YOU** STOLE THE MONEY.

I NEVER SAID YOU **STOLE** THE MONEY.

I NEVER SAID YOU STOLE **THE** MONEY.

I NEVER SAID YOU STOLE THE **MONEY**.

Communication is a joint process. Look at the word: "COM" = together; "UNI" = become one. It is the act of bringing two people together, to understand one another, to be on the same page or playing field, so to speak.

Communication is the way to say, "**Welcome, friend!**" to one another.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO GET THE RIGHT MESSAGE:

Choosing -- Sending -- Listening and Understanding

Choosing the Right Message

1. Decide **what** we want to say.
2. Decide **how** we want to say it.
3. Consider the **feelings** of the message recipient.

Sending the Message

This will apply to oral as well as written messages.

1. Say what we want to say.
2. Ensure that our words and our non-verbal signals are consistent.

Let's think about oral interactions: (DON'T SAY ONE THING and then do another thing... For example: Perhaps we spoke from the pulpit and we said that all women are **welcome** to join the League, then on the way out of church we walk right by without smiling, not saying hello the next time we meet at church or on the street, etc.)

Listening and Understanding (on the part of the recipient)

1. Hear the words.
2. Interpret the non-verbal signals.
3. Listen actively.
4. Cope with distractions.

It is at this point that the message is received or lost.

Back to the workshop: take your papers and now I'd like you **to think of your prayer life**, your times of relationship with Jesus. Close your eyes and think of the place where you pray best. Is it a regular occurrence? Do you do all the talking or do you allow open time for Jesus to speak to your heart? Have you allowed Jesus to say **"Welcome, friend!"** to you?

I will give you one minute to think of **a little idea** that may have come to you in prayer recently. Did you ever think that this might be a message from Jesus that He needs you to act on in the world today?

As receivers, we must **pay attention and listen** to what is being said and the way in which it is being said. Write that idea along the left side of the top fourth fold on your paper.

Once we have heard the message, only then can we **choose the right response** and continue the cycle.

To communicate **well**, we need to **listen well** and **pay attention**.

Part Five: A Communication Challenge

We'll see if you are listening well and paying attention. We shall see also if I am communicating well with you!

- Take your paper and carefully tear along the right side of each fold to about an inch from the center.
- Make sure your tears about as long as your index finger.

Meditation on the torn paper

1. Hold up your paper. See how the light shines in? Someone once told a story about it being when our lives are shattered and torn, then God's light can shine in to help us.
2. Look at the paper, it almost looks like an angel, wiggle its wings and send your thoughts to heaven!
3. From the bag on your table, you will each need to take some tools: You each need: a stick, a pin, a tiny square (a mini coaster), and 2 plastic beads or a ring of the cut straw.
4. Take your pin and poke it through the center of the mini-coaster.
5. Turn the paper over, coloured side up.
6. Push the pin thru about one-half inch down from the point. on the right side of one of your folds,thus tucking your words under
7. Hold the papers on your pin, move to the right and poke the pin thru the top of the next triangle tip, one-half inch down from the top.
8. Clutching your pin and papers, rotate your paper and poke the pin through about one-half inch down on the next wing.
9. And so on to the last. **Now do you see what we are doing!?!**
10. Carefully, holding your pin and papers, poke the pin through the center of the folded lines.

11. Now add the plastic ring or 2 beads, and grab a stick. Push the pin into the top of the stick about once inch down from the top.

Viola! Blow!

Now, let's make a wish. Recalling that the Holy Spirit is the breath of God and our pinwheels are our hearts' delight, let's blow that breath and make our world spin!
"Welcome, friend!" We want to say to all!

Conclusion

To close, I will borrow the words of Edwards Hays to pray:

Come O You who are ever-new,
Wrap our hearts in new skin, ever flexible to be reformed by your Spirit.

Set our feet to fresh paths this day: inspire us to speak original and life-
Giving words and to creatively give shape to the new.

Come and teach us how to dance with delight
Whenever You send a new melody our way!

We thank You, Lord, for the gifts with which You have blessed each one of us. We pray for an open heart, glad to appreciate the riches among us. We pray that we may build on what we are, to the realization of Your reign. We make this prayer in the name of the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thank you very much!