



Build the Path

Forming the Team Community

RELATIONSHIP

EVANGELISM

RECONCILIATION

WEEKEND TEAM FORMATION

FORMING AN APOSTOLIC TEAM

The purpose of Cursillo is to lead Christians to become active apostles for Jesus Christ. Having been redeemed by Christ, baptized Christians are called to share His love with others through the Apostolic Message.

Each Episcopal Cursillo Weekend offers a new opportunity for the existing Cursillo community to renew the Cursillo Ministry and to help renew the Church. It puts the Jesus Movement into action by encouraging the growth and renewal of Christian Apostles.

Team formation provides an opportunity for team members to see more clearly the purpose of Cursillo in their lives and in the life of the Church. It offers practice of the Cursillo Method in a special way as they prepare for the Weekend.

Team formation is the process by which Cursillistas come together to plan and to carry out a Cursillo Weekend. Team formation requires planning using certain Cursillo fundamental principles, but it will not “just happen” without careful planning. These fundamental principles will motivate the team and hold the team together. These fundamental principles are essential, not only to the cohesion of the team but also to the message that is conveyed and received during the Weekend.

BASICS OF TEAM FORMATION

The Lay Rector (alternatively call the Lay Coordinator) and the Spiritual Director need to understand Cursillo’s fundamental principles as they plan to form and work with the Team. Some of these principles focus on Cursillo practices; others concentrate on core Christian teachings. This Team Formation phase is to make sure that individual members come together and truly work as a team.

1. Prayer is an important part of this process and should be intentional. The Lord answers prayer and works through the Cursillo Ministry.
2. God gives Christians different gifts and expects each to use those gifts for His honor and glory. Generally, teams should be composed of people with different gifts, socioeconomic backgrounds, having varied experience with Cursillo and occupations. When the Weekend is for Candidates* of both sexes, the Team should be composed of a mix of men and woman.

* Some regions use the term “Candidate” and others use “Pilgrim.” The choice is up to the diocese. For consistency, “Candidate” is used here, but both terms are appropriate.

THE APOSTOLIC MESSAGE

The Apostolic Message is to share Christ in the world—to be bearers and witnesses of the Good News. During the Episcopal Cursillo Weekend, team members must convey that call to the candidates. Team members do that best when they coordinate their efforts as a team and demonstrate through their actions how to share the Apostolic Message.

Episcopal Cursillo Ministry®

PO Box 7777

Myrtle Beach, SC 29572

Phone: 303-823-1802

Info@EpiscopalCursilloMinistry.org

<https://www.EpiscopalCursilloMinistry.org>

(Replaces “Apostolic Message & Team Formation” #10 - 2008)

COPYRIGHT ©2017 by Episcopal Cursillo Ministry.

All rights reserved

PERMISSION TO COPY

The Episcopal Cursillo Ministry holds copyrights on all printed and published Episcopal Cursillo Ministry materials.

The Episcopal Cursillo Ministry Committee herein extends permission to Secretariats, Committees, teams and individuals within Episcopal Cursillo Ministry to make copies of materials provided through the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry website as needed for the functions of local Cursillo ministries.

Under no circumstances may the materials copied under this permission be sold.

3. The projection of the Apostolic Message through word and deed is an integral part of team formation since that is the purpose of Cursillo. One major purpose of Team Formation is for team members to learn to love one another so that, in turn, they can love all who come to the Weekend.
4. Planning is very important for Team Formation and for the Cursillo Weekend. Make sure there is “space” for the Holy Spirit to work since experience has found that the Spirit works positively during both the team formation and the Weekend.
5. There are some requirements for team members following the guidance of the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry. There are other highly recommended suggestions for team formation based on the long history of implementing many teams for Episcopal Cursillo Weekends.

ASSEMBLING THE TEAM

The first step in the process of developing a team is to have a Lay Rector (or Coordinator) named as well as a Spiritual Director. Generally, the Secretariat (the administrative arm of the Cursillo Ministry at the Diocesan level) recommends to the Diocesan Bishop a person for the Lay Rector position. The Diocesan Bishop usually approves that person and often names a member of the clergy as Spiritual Director for the Weekend. As soon as they have been named, the Lay Rector and Spiritual Director should form a Group Reunion to pray about a vision for the Weekend. They should also pray for guidance as they begin thinking about and recruiting persons to serve on the Weekend. Frequently, members of the core team are added to this group reunion as they are selected. In some cases, and helpfully, a member of the Secretariat, the Bishop, a member of the Servant Community, or the Lay Rector of a previous Weekend will be a part of this Reunion Group.

There are a number of places where names of possible lay members of the team might be sourced: Lay Rectors of previous Weekends, Secretariat members, the Bishop, local Ultreyas leaders, parish priests, and Servant Community members should all be asked to recommend people for the team. Particular attention should be given to those who attend a Reunion Group regularly. Some diocesan Diocesan Ministries require that the Rector of a Weekend pass on a list of the new Cursillistas (those who have just gone through a Weekend) who might be good team members for future Weekends. Such listing can be very helpful in identifying possible team members.

The members of this new Group Reunion of key leaders should be open to the Holy Spirit working in their midst — calling them to a new ministry of discernment and uniting them with Christ. This process of discernment should not be rushed; the new Group Reunion must pray and take as much time as needed to determine God’s will and to consecrate the members of the group to God and His Work.

WHO TO ASK

When selecting team members, there are some basic requirements and guidelines to keep in mind; these include:

- Members of an Episcopal Cursillo Weekend team should be members of The Episcopal Church (TEC) or another denomination that is in full communion with the TEC such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Would-be team members who are not members of the TEC, but who are in denomination in full communion with TEC, should generally be approved by the bishops of both denominations before joining the team. These requirements follow the principles outlined in diocesan Pastoral Plans which outlines how each diocesan governing body of Cursillo (generally called the Secretariat) will function under the direction of its local Bishop..
- An additional requirement is that all team members must be baptized Christians. This does not mean that one must have been an Episcopalian when baptized, but the baptism must be one that TEC recognizes. If a question arises on this point, consult the bishop.
- A team member should be a regular attendee and participant in a parish. In many dioceses, a would-be team member must be endorsed by his/her parish priest.
- A team member must have must have been a Candidate at, and completed, a Cursillo Weekend. Preferably, this should be an Episcopal Cursillo Weekend since some features of an Episcopal Weekend are unique and are not part of other similar experiences such as Walk to Emmaus (a Cursillo-like program developed in the United Methodist Church. Please note, however, that this preference is not a requirement. The Episcopal Cursillo Ministry (ECM), which oversees the entirety of Cursillo in TEC, has no policy that requires a would-be team member to have attended and Episcopal Cursillo Weekend. The Diocesan Secretariat may adopt a more stringent policy on this subject with the approval of the local Episcopal Bishop.

- Members should be using the Cursillo Method in their walk with Christ — meaning that they are involved in study, piety, and action which includes meeting with Reunion Groups and attending Ultreyas. A major purpose of the Weekend is to encourage candidates to use the Cursillo Method in living their Christian life. Those who use the Method on a continuing basis are the best people to encourage others to adopt and use it.
- The team should have the diversity that is needed for a Cursillo Weekend. Unless the Weekend is for one gender only, there should be a balance of men and women. The team should also reflect the racial, age, socioeconomic, and geographic diversity of members of the Diocese. If you anticipate having Candidates with some specific background or experience (college students, recovering alcoholics, teachers, etc), then you will need to seek some team members who share that background or who can identify with that background.
- Make sure the team has a balance between members who have had experience working the Weekend and those who have no experience working the Weekend Team. Failure to recruit newer Cursillistas to teams can be harmful to a diocese's Cursillo Ministry in the long-run newer Cursillistas will lose incentive to stay involved. Also, experienced Cursillistas need fresh ideas that newer Cursillistas bring to the Weekend. Conversely, experienced Cursillistas need to be involved because of their experience in solving problems and working with Candidates.
- If a would-be team member has a disability, determine how much can be done to accommodate his/her needs. Envision what he/she can bring to the Weekend, but be realistic about assessing whether that person will be able to serve gracefully, faithfully, and attentively on the team.
- When asking individuals to serve on team, Lay Rectors should ask them to pray about the decision before agreeing to serve. Some may decline to because of circumstances of which the discernment group is not aware. Many discernment groups for team formation develop a listing of possible team member that includes more than the number needed in order to account for the inevitability that some who are asked will be unable to serve on the Weekend.

BUILDING THROUGH SHARING

An integral part of the first meeting of Weekend Team, and at each meeting thereafter, is the sharing of individual team members' life experiences. There are at least three important reasons why this step is very important. The sharing can and should build community which contributes to a cohesive team vision. If the members do not coalesce as a team by the time of the Weekend, there can be serious problems on the Weekend. The individual sharing also provides a means for team members to grow in their Christian walk as they express various aspects of their own faith and hear others talk about their faith. The personal sharing also demonstrates the importance of and models the sharing process that will be an integral part of the Weekend.



There are many ways to bring about sharing and team building: through having each person share his/her faith journey with other team members, grouping, praying, singing and worshipping together, hearing and commenting on each others talks, as well as eating together. It is recommended that the Spiritual Advisor Group (Spiritual Advisor for the Weekend plus other clergy people who will be working the Weekend) be an integral part of the sharing process, not segregating themselves from the lay members of the team. However, there may be times when the Spiritual Advisor Group meets by themselves to discuss what each will be doing during the team meetings and on the Cursillo Weekend.

The sharing enables team members to get to know one another beyond the acquaintanceship level. The time together also enables everyone to become accustomed to a sense of each person's pace and timing. This is an important dimension that each team member should understand prior to the Weekend.

If there is a Palanca Team praying for each team member while the team meeting is taking place, it is important for the Palanca Team members to be a part of some of the team meeting, such as when the floating group reunion is done. Members of the Palanca Team should be distributed among the various groups while they are grouping.

Generally speaking, at least three team meetings should be held. Four or five meetings are recommended. The key criterion to use in determining the number of team meetings is to have as many team meetings as it takes to build a sense of camaraderie in the team. It takes time for the team to build community, so they can prepare to build community with Candidates.

Some may protest that the time commitment demanded of team members is unreasonable. Getting a team to know each other and become cohesive is one of the most important elements for a successful Cursillo Weekend. If a person is unable to make the necessary commitment, then he/she should not be a team member at this time.

A tough question is what to do if someone whom you believe God is calling to serve on the Weekend Team must miss a team meeting. Obviously, missing a team meeting impairs the process of building community. The Rector of the Weekend and the Spiritual Director must discern the cost of this absence and if the team can afford the cost.

MARKS OF A WELL-FORMED TEAM

● **SERVANT MENTALITY**

This is a willingness to spend and to be spent for the sake of others. What we seek in a Cursillo Weekend is not our own good but to be a blessing to others. We are willing to listen to them, to love them, to serve them, and to pray with and for them.

● **OPENNESS**

Like Jesus, we welcome others without preconceptions or expectations. True openness comes from being rooted in the Holy Spirit.

● **PRAYER**

Prayer is the engine that drives and guides the Weekend. We often think that we need prayer in order to get God to bless our efforts. In truth, the initiative is God's, and we are invited to share in God's work. Prayer is a way in which God embraces us, encourages us, and refreshes us. God works in prayer to open our eyes to new opportunities, to guide us with wisdom, to inspire us, and to confirm us in love. Prayer should thoroughly surround the team during formation and during the Weekend.

● **COLLEGIALITY**

Collegiality affirms the unity and interdependence of every member on the team. In Cursillo, the team is composed of Christians who share together in a common mission and message of Christ. It overcomes all artificial divisions and eliminates the mentality of us-against-them.

● **TRUST**

Trust is confidence in God and God's will as we see it and know it through Jesus Christ. It is based in the faith that Paul expressed when he said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

● **PEACE**

Peace grows out of the recognition and acceptance that ultimately the world is in God's hands.

ASSIGNING THE TASKS

Discernment is also necessary in assigning tasks, and a tracking system is necessary to assure that tasks are satisfactorily completed in a timely manner. The Lay Rector and those who are in discernment with him/her need a working knowledge of what tasks must be done before and during the Cursillo Weekend. Some knowledge about the gifts members bring to the Weekend — including the members' shortcomings and limitations — should also be a part of the process. Knowing tasks that members of the Weekend Team have done previously is also valuable.

It is important that members of the Weekend Team not be assigned the same tasks that they have always done. It is easier for an individual to appreciate what another team member is doing if he/she has done it on a previous weekend. This doesn't mean that a team member must never be assigned a task that they have done previously, but it does mean that there is a need to keep team members from getting into a rut. Rotating tasks discourages them from viewing a task as theirs for life, to the exclusion of all others.

The Lay Rector should carefully explain what is expected of each team member. In some cases, certain people have the ability to do specific tasks but are reluctant to do them because they have no experience. This is particularly true for team members unaccustomed to public speaking who are not eager to talk in front of others. Yet, the reluctant person may have a wonderful spiritual journey to share, which would be very valuable for the Weekend. The Lay Rector needs to be encouraging and emphasize that help is available from written materials, experiences of people on the team, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Keep in mind that Cursillo is all about producing leaders — not only among the Candidates for the Weekend, but also among the team members.

Another important consideration in assigning tasks is how to coordinate the execution of those tasks. This necessitates both a vision of how various activities fit together in terms of timing and deployment of personnel as well as a mechanism for getting feedback promptly about how it's going and what problems are developing.

A TEAM WITH PURPOSE

Everyone on the Cursillo Weekend Team needs to understand the purpose of the team so well that their mutual understanding effectively holds the team together. The purpose, which is to embody and deliver the Apostolic Message, must permeate all that is done in preparation for the Weekend. Anything inconsistent with that purpose should be eliminated.

Two Aspects of the Team's Purpose:



1. **An understanding of the story we proclaim** — an understanding in which the story makes logical sense in its progression and congruity. The story we proclaim is a story of God's love for each person, as reflected in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and of how God's love for each person results in salvation. It is also a story of how God's love for others and an individual's love for God compels that individual to pursue their salvation as well. It is a story of how and why God brings us to love each other, notwithstanding our inclinations to the contrary. God calls us before and during the Weekend to understand and articulate that story in a coherent way.



2. **An understanding of the need for community** — becoming a community and living together as a community before and during the Three-Day Weekend reflects a vital cohesion. It is what Christ wants in his Church. As important as it is for us to articulate the story in a verbally coherent way, it is even more important for our behavior, our interactions, and our very being to proclaim God's peace and inexhaustible love God has for us all.



Our coherence must attract and incorporate the Candidates into that community. Candidates must see how the Apostolic Message is embodied in our actions. Candidates must see that God's Message should be shared in community — should be a joint effort. God does not intend any of us to "fly solo." The Apostolic Message is the glue that prompts the team to stick together, so that each one involved in the Weekend not only sees the possibility that God can use him/her as an agent of salvation, but also feels and welcomes God's call to the adventure of ministry for that purpose.

Growing mutual understanding and mutual vision is the work of the Holy Spirit. This common vision and purpose takes shape as the team prayerfully and carefully works and plans together. There is no single recipe that works in all circumstances.

To make sure that the Apostolic Message is being declared in words and deed during the team meetings and on the Weekend, the Lay Rector of the Weekend and the Spiritual Director should encourage team members to provide input as to how things are going as far as proclaiming the Apostolic Message. The Rector and the Spiritual Director cannot "see" everything that is taking place. They need the eyes and ears of those on the team who can spot positive ways the Message is being proclaimed and any potential negative aspects which might be deterring the Message. This structure facilitates the team's cohesion of purpose and should be started during the team meetings and continued during the Weekend.

COMMITMENT TO THE APOSTOLIC MESSAGE

There are two major vehicles to assist in deepening the Team's Commitment to the Apostolic Message. One is to hear again the Apostolic Message through understanding the flow of the Weekend. The other is to actually proclaim the aspects of the Apostolic Message during the team meetings.

It is incumbent on the Spiritual Advisor to be sure that every member of the team grasps the overall flow of the weekend. During one of the early team meetings, the Spiritual Advisor should explain the flow of the Weekend, how it moves from the general to the specific. This presentation is meant to ignite a greater commitment to apostolic action by the team members. Hearing again about the wonderful gift that God has given us through Christ and what he wants his apostles to do — spread the good news — is energizing and motivating.

The second way in which the team meetings can deepen the team's commitment to apostolic witness is to actually have members do some apostolic witnessing themselves. After the first team building meeting they will begin presenting the talks or Rollos* that they have been assigned. The talks need to include essential content that is detailed in *The Lay Talk Workbook*. The talks should also include some of the team members own experiences relating to the assigned topic.

Many Rectors have members give the talks or Rollos to the entire team with the other team members evaluating what was "good" and what could be improved about the talk. The advantage of this method is that team members hear the talks, which promotes their understanding of the Gospel message and the Cursillo method. Some people believe that this is not the best way to encourage quality talks because peers are much less apt to give suggestions for improvement for a Rollo when they know that they will be subject to the evaluation of others when they give their talk. If this is the case, ask veteran Cursillistas, who know the talks very well, to be present when the talks are given and be a major source for the evaluative comments.

** Originally, the term "Rollo" was used in most area. Now, some areas choose to simply call them "Talks" or other terms. The choice is up to the diocese.*

COMMITMENT TO THE CURSILLO METHOD

In light of the effort to restrict team membership to those who are regular in group reunion, Ultreyas, and spiritual direction, it may seem strange to have a goal of educating team members in the Cursillo Method. Nevertheless, we must assure that all team members know and use the nuts and bolts of the Cursillo Method. They must clearly can see how the Cursillo Method applies in various situations and so they can interact appropriately with each other and with candidates about what is going on during the Weekend.

The team will hear about the Cursillo Method when the Spiritual Director describes the flow of the Weekend. They will hear about it again later when they hear the Rollos given by various team members during the team meetings. And, the team will come to understand how that the groups and relationships that form during the Weekend at the tables and elsewhere are a part of the Weekend by design, not by chance. The groups serve the purpose of showing Cursillistas what can happen when Christians are linked together in prayer, study, discussion, and supportive relationships. What can happen is apostolic action — witnessing in a variety of ways to the power and love of Jesus Christ. It is an active illustration of participating in the Jesus Movement.

The Episcopal Cursillo Weekend introduces the concept and structure of Group Reunion and its reason for being. It is the linking of individuals in Christian faith to carry on the work of evangelism in their environments. Everything in the Cursillo Weekend must point in this direction. This is the lasting gift the team members offer to the Candidates. Therefore, team members need to see this as their primary purpose and to focus their mutual work together towards presenting that gift.

FOLLOWING THE CURSILLO METHOD

The team members must be well educated in the Cursillo Method and be able to demonstrate it during the weekend. As the groups develop, table leaders should track how discussions proceed and whether they stay on topic. But, table leaders should also look for ways to get participants to visualize applying new insights to themselves and their environments.

Asking questions like "How might you carry out _____ in your home, workplace, school, or church?" or "How do you think this idea could be applied back home?" can help participants begin to see how they can work to evangelize their environments. Training should be given to table leaders about the best methods they might utilize as table leaders.

During the Weekend, the table leaders are not the only team members involved in the process of encouraging individuals to discuss their faith and concerns. Any team member may find an opportunity to engage with a Candidate in active listening, being supportive, and honoring confidentiality. The style of every team member during the Cursillo Weekend must reflect the Group Reunion mentality. If what we hope to achieve in Group Reunion is a basic openness and eagerness to work together, then we will exhibit this kind of behavior throughout the Cursillo Weekend.

WE LIVE AS MODELS

St. Paul did not hesitate to suggest that Christians should imitate his example. We, then, should be willing to be examples to others on the Weekend. All members of the team must see their role as offering the candidates a model for living the life of grace.

- **We have an open, listening and caring attitude** to show our willingness to accept the candidates as friends and equals. Candidates are often anxious and full of questions about the experience of the Weekend. We build rapport by listening. In this way, everyone on the Weekend will be working together for a common goal.
- **We exhibit behavior that is intended to bear with and lift up one another.** Supporting each other as fellow members of the body of Christ is the lifeblood of the community God forms. Often candidates come to a Cursillo Weekend expecting the team will try to correct them or will try to promote a specific kind of religious experience. Our task is not to correct or promote, but to show how God leads us each other and toward togetherness. We do this by taking each other seriously and by caring for one another. This kind of supportive relationship accepts where people are in their spiritual journeys. In truth, all of us, no matter where we are in our spiritual journeys. In truth, all of us, no matter where we are in our spiritual journeys, can grow deeper in our relationship to Christ. By supporting one another where we are, we can enable one another to move beyond the present and to consider the possibilities that the future in Christ may hold.
- **We must behave in ways that respect the confidentiality of others.** By keeping confidentiality, we show that we can be trusted. Sometimes, Cursillo teams become obsessed with the success of the Weekend. Members begin to talk with one another about a number of concerns, having to do with this or that issue, or particular participants. It is even possible for a climate of gossip or murmuring to be fostered. Such a climate can negatively affect the sense of wholeness about the Weekend, and it can damage community. Confidentiality can be compromised in such situations, breaking down the purpose and intent of the Weekend. When such conditions arise, they must be dealt with immediately. During team formation, we can guard against these problems with frank discussion among team members, in addition to practicing the rule of confidentiality.
- **We remember that success on a Episcopal Cursillo Weekend comes from the Holy Spirit.** What Cursillo is designed to accomplish is the embodiment of the Apostolic Message in a Christian community. This will happen when we intentionally display openness to and acceptance of all that Christ taught to His followers. If team members lay aside their own prerogatives, preferences, and concerns, letting the Holy Spirit work through them, they will contribute to building confidence among the team members that the Weekend will be a success. All of this rests on God, whose will they seek and whose guidance makes the Weekend possible. There will arise a certain peace and confidence, a loving detachment from whatever is going on in the world, with a trust that God is at work here among us.

AND, INCLUDE THE FOURTH DAY COMMUNITY

While the Cursillo team gives its primary attention and focus to accomplishing the goals of the Weekend, team members should always be mindful of the Fourth Day community. After all, the primary goal of the Weekend is to prepare Candidates for the Fourth Day of their lives, and the purpose of the Cursillo Weekend is to involve more Christians in living out the Fourth Day. With this in mind, it is important during team formation to look for ways where the Fourth Day community can be included.

The most basic way to include the Fourth Day community in the work of the Weekend is through Palanca. Since Palanca is prayer, prayer should be requested and welcomed from the very beginning.

Both Fourth Day groups and individuals should offer Palanca in a systematic way to the team and Candidates during team formation as well as throughout the Weekend:

- Prayer vigils are an important way to give this support. All represented parishes should be involved in this.
- Prayers for the talks and the presenters are a specific form of Palanca.
- Special works of self-sacrifice, another type of Palanca, may also be offered during the Weekend.
- We can show support and prayer for specific individuals on the Weekend with written Palanca.
- The Fourth Day community may offer Palanca in the form of direct assistance such as rides, child care, errands, etc. during the Weekend.

It is important to enlist Fourth Day community support early in the process so Palanca can flow from the beginning of team formation through the Weekend itself. Weekend leaders should reach out to parishes and the Fourth Day community from the beginning and provide ongoing communication about the progress of the Weekend. If specific support is needed, lists of needs should be widely published.

Sponsors are perhaps the most important group in providing Palanca. In many dioceses, sponsors are invited to a special event, either a team meeting or a sponsors' commissioning service, where their importance to the process is reinforced and where their connection to the success of the Weekend is emphasized. Sponsors should lead the Fourth Day community in providing Palanca for the Weekend and should receive Palanca as well with respect to their vital role.

The entire Cursillo community should give the Clausura careful attention and prayerful support. Clausura is sometimes referred to as the Closing, but that is not what the word means. The Clausura is a bracketing or embracing of the Cursillistas who are completing the Weekend. It is to incorporate them with members of the Fourth Day community. Clausura also demonstrates how potent a force small groups can be in the Church and in the world.

The Clausura is not a time to thank various members of the community or the team for what they have done. Rather, it is a time to let members of the community witness to the task of apostolic action. New and veteran members of the Cursillo Ministry should speak about their ministries and should welcome the new Cursillistas to share those ministries in their own environments. The witnesses at the Clausura offer testimonies showing how the Christian life (the Fourth Day) is being lived out. If this message is lost, the Clausura has missed its goal. The Lay Rector and the Spiritual Advisor(s) should work with the Secretariat to ensure that the Clausura is done succinctly and focused on the Apostolic Message.



EPISCOPAL
CURSILLO
MINISTRY

RECONCILIATION ■ EVANGELISM ■ RELATIONSHIP