

# We will be happy if... we help others to forgive!

"Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will receive mercy"  
(Mt 5,7)



## Objective

Look at the situations where mercy is most needed, in our daily lives and in society.

**Work** concretely to help others to forgive and to ask for forgiveness.



## How did it go?

Allot **space for dialogue** and **sharing** of what each one has lived. The experiences lived and difficulties encountered. Recall the objectives that we had proposed during the last meeting: "how did it go?"



## Introductory Activity

### MERCY AND FORGIVENESS.

**Proposal 1** Let us invite and interview someone who works as a mediator for peace. Before he/she comes, let us gather information about his/her work and prepare questions for an interview that we may later publish. With well-defined questions, let us use well this opportunity to understand the importance of mercy and forgiveness

**Proposal 2** Let us interview one another on this topic which we then publish on our website or we send to the gen 3 of our zone or the gen 3 centre. Here are some questions we could answer for example:

Jesus says: "blessed are the merciful"; have we experienced this beatitude in us?

- Have we already made an experience of that peace and freedom which comes from asking for forgiveness?
- How do we feel when relationships are tense and there is no forgiveness and reconciliation?
- Let us make a list of precise situations around us, in the city or even at an international level where forgiveness and mercy would be a real solution.
- How can we prepare ourselves to become instruments of dialogue, peace and mercy?
- Don't forget that little efforts, made by many, change the mentality and make an impact in society.



## This is how we live

In my country, there is a lack of peace and freedom of movement because of the borders and the wall that divides Palestine and Israel.

Every time that we want to go out of Bethlehem for example to Jerusalem which is only 7km away, we have to ask for authorisation from the Israelis, which is not always granted.

I remember once that we were able to have the necessary authorisation, we went to Haifa in Israel and we stayed there for 3 days together with the other gen 3 who live there. Together we had the idea of **going to the hospital** to bring joy to the sick and we prepared a beautiful program.

We went with the idea that **we were going to meet Muslims, Jews and Christians**. This gave us so much joy but on that particular day, all the patients in the ward were Jews. We didn't know how to interact with them because we speak two different languages and also because the only Jews we ever had contact with were the soldiers at the borders.

But then the ice melted and we experienced an extraordinary moment: They started coming towards us and at once we immediately threw ourselves into playing and interacting with them.

**We felt no more the differences between us and we were no longer**

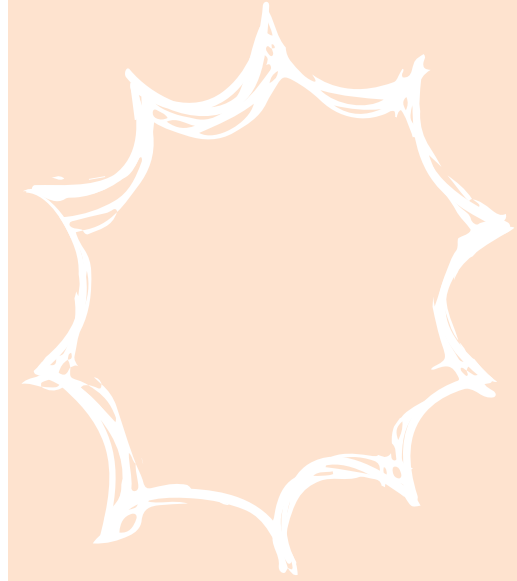


**enemies**, but we sang, danced, played and even ate together, and at the end we left a little gift for each one so they would remember us.

Even though we live practically in the same country, we have no contact with Jews and what I lived I could say, helped me and made a positive impact on me because I was able to live as the Gospel says: "Love one another".

I understood that we are all human, with the same joys and sufferings, and that even though we are of different religions and cultures, we have to go ahead and believe that step by step we will reach peace one day.

*N. S. and L. Holy Land*



We will be happy if...  
**we help others to forgive!**



**M**y brother Dominic had an accident three years ago. Climbing on an electric pole playfully, he got an electric shock with very serious burns all over his body. His recovery took months but the worst moment was the first weeks when he was still in a coma.

This **serious incident** affected the lives of each one of us in the family. There are seven of us children in the family, five brothers and two sisters. I prayed so much for my sister who at the moment of the accident was only 2 months old. Since my parents had to look after my brother in the hospital, I had to look after her.

Every day, my parents travelled one hour to spend some time with my brother. **Even my thirteenth birthday was not celebrated** because the situation was still very critical. But God made us



experience that He had a plan of love on us, even in that difficult situation.

Through this incident, we felt the love of so many people who were always close to us and helped us in various ways.

For me it was also an opportunity to start again. Actually, among my brothers, I was least close to Dominic and we quarrelled often.

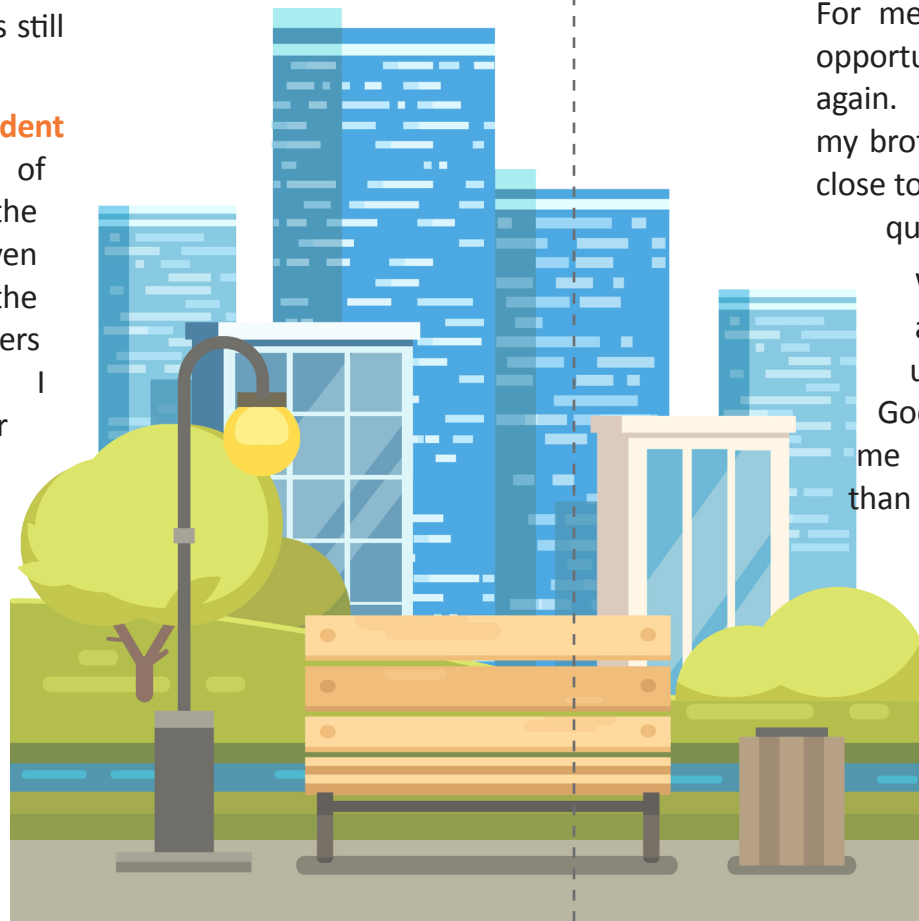
While visiting him at the hospital, I understood that God wanted from me something more than just looking after my brother in this time of need: He wanted me to **build a new**

**relationship with him.**

And to start, He was giving me the possibility to love him through the care he needed. At the same time, God gave me the chance to love my Mum and Dad, in taking responsibility for my little sister. And naturally, He gave me the opportunity to love the little sister I had waited for so much.

Today, my brother is fine and desires to be enrolled in the military academy. Our relationship is still not perfect but we understand one another much more than before and we try to love one another even when it is not easy.

N. Croatia



We will be happy if...  
we help others to forgive!



Going into depth



## THE GOLDEN RULE



Chiara Lubich,  
*Coloriamo la Città*  
p. 10


There is a word of the Gospel which makes us think: "all that you want people to do for you, you too do it for them" (Mt 7,12) It is a universal law, common to all the religions and written in the heart of every man, so precious to merit the name: "The Golden Rule".

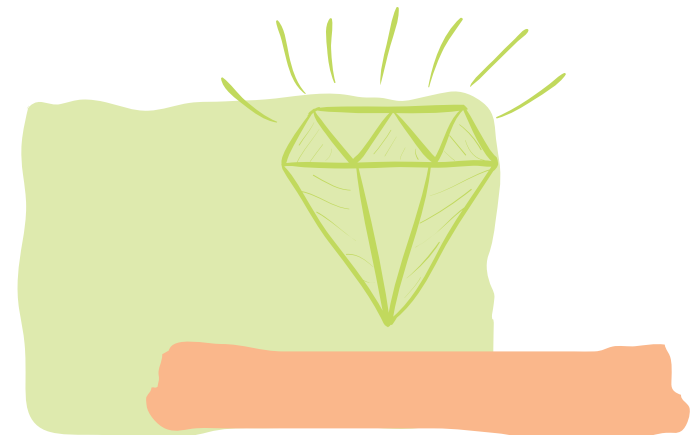
Every person we meet during the day, good or bad, young or old, friend or enemy, let us love in this way! Let us imagine ourselves **in his/her situation** and treat him/her as we would like to be treated.

A voice within us will suggest to us what to say or do in every circumstance. Is he/she hungry? I am hungry, let us think and give him/her something to eat. Is he/she feeling morally low? I am feeling so. Let us try to comfort him/her and share his/her suffering.

Is he/she in difficulty? I want to love him/her to the point of almost feeling in me his/her discomfort. Certainly, acting like this is so far from our way of thinking and acting but take courage! This is the secret that will enable us to be fulfilled as persons and to find the happiness we are looking for.

Sometimes it will be difficult and we would like to go back to our life as it was before, but let us go ahead, starting all over again always and **gradually the world around us will start to change.**

Let us try from now, starting with the person next to us. A day lived like this is worth a life time! We will experience that living the Gospel **gives colour to our existence and brings light into the world.** 



We will be happy if...  
**we help others to forgive!**



## PSYCHOLOGICAL TIPS

**Raffaele Cavaliere**  
*Perdonare*  
*(To Forgive, our translation)*  
*Ed. Città Nuova.*  
*Pag 104-105*

It is realistic to think that every person during his/her life time has done some wrong, inflicted pain or caused suffering to a fellow human being, and it is also obvious that each person has had to suffer, bear injustice, mortifications, offences, or injuries from others. These negative interactions often disturb human relationships, either among relatives or between good friends.

People who have been injured for a certain time might nurse in their hearts some hatred towards the other, they feel humiliated, they are angry, they hate and refuse any contact with their “aggressor”. They accuse the other, they try to make him/her responsible and feel the guilt. Certainly, the other, even though he/she tries to be indifferent, feels he/she is wrong, feels uncomfortable in front of the suffering inflicted and often feels afflicted because of being incapable of repairing the damage they have caused.

Forgiveness becomes an interior process to heal the wounds, rebuild the relationships, lessen one’s own sufferings and those of the others. To free oneself from this sense of guilt becomes possible when from both sides there is the desire to forgive. The other is no longer seen as an enemy, as a threat to one’s serenity, a danger to one’s psychological stability. Forgiveness brings inner peace; hatred, accusations,

the sense of guilt vanish into thin air. The process of forgiveness automatically means a revision of one’s own position, accepting one’s own responsibility in the dynamics that made the situation worse; one is capable of seeing one’s own errors and we understand also why the other had failed without accusing him/her again.

This allows one to have a more objective view of the facts of the situation: emotions, egoisms, one’s defensiveness fall into second place and one is able to be more rational and less emotive in analysing the situation. When forgiveness reconciles people from both sides, they feel the desire to work on their own faults, there is the commitment to avoid the errors that may destabilise the relationships in the future. Forgiveness becomes a source of wisdom for life. 🛠️

## TESTIMONIES OF RECONCILIATION

### *Colombia - Truth in reconciliation*

Link up February 23, 2018

<http://collegamentoch.focolare.org/2018/02/23/la-verita-nella-riconciliazione/>

### *Belfast, Northern Ireland. Beyond the invisible walls*

Link up April 28, 2018

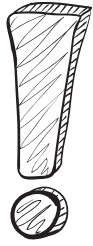
<http://collegamentoch.focolare.org/2018/04/28/belfast-irlanda-del-nord-oltre-i-muri-invisibili/>

### *Armoy, Northern Ireland.*

#### *The courage to rebuild a community*

<http://collegamentoch.focolare.org/2018/04/28/armoy-irlanda-del-nord-il-coraggio-di-ricostruire-una-comunita/>

We will be happy if...  
we help others to forgive!



We will try!

Sometimes the people around us find it difficult or they don't want to forgive those who have offended them. We are the "salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" Jesus said and as such we will try to:

1. listen with patience and without prejudices to those who have quarrelled so that we can help them have more light about their situation;
2. to be instruments of reconciliation among friends, relatives or other people who have quarrelled and who do not have good relationships.

We will be happy if...  
we help others to forgive!



## Where are we at?

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.

Have we been able to forgive or help someone to forgive?

Difficulties encountered

Results achieved

Handwritten grid area for notes, consisting of a large grid of light green lines on a white background, with a vertical green bar on the right side.

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?
- Did the young people highlight **any area which was difficult and hurtful**? Do we think this topic could be considered concluded or is it necessary to deepen something again in the next meeting?
- How can we assistants **help** these young people in their commitment till the next meeting?

We will be happy if...  
we help others to forgive!