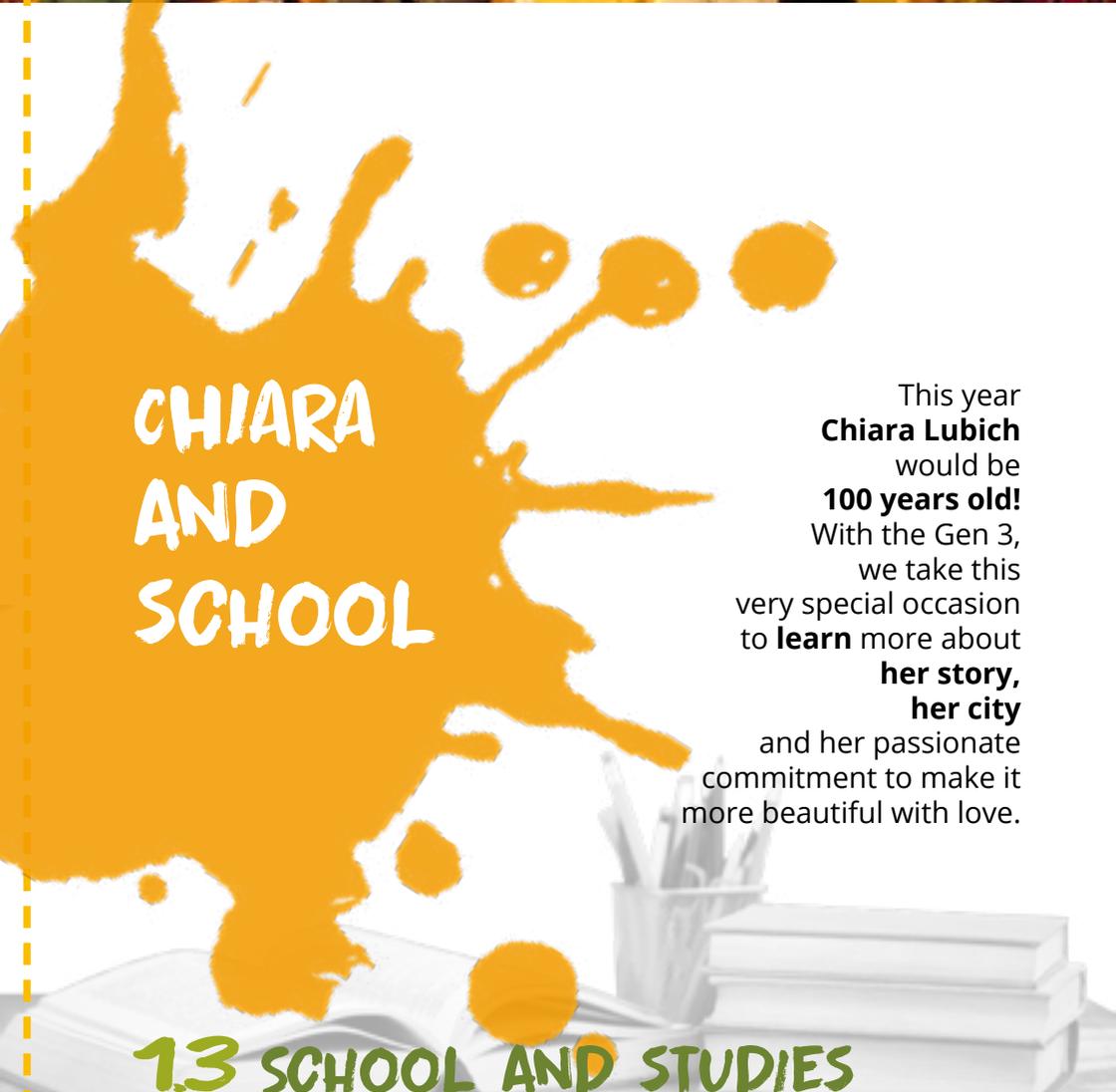


1920 **100** years 2020

Chiara



# CHIARA AND SCHOOL

This year  
**Chiara Lubich**  
would be  
**100 years old!**  
With the Gen 3,  
we take this  
very special occasion  
to **learn** more about  
**her story,**  
**her city**  
and her passionate  
commitment to make it  
more beautiful with love.

## 1.3 SCHOOL AND STUDIES



## 1.3 SCHOOL AND STUDIES



### Objectives

- get to know some episodes of Chiara's story as a student.
- grow in the awareness that studying with commitment is a way of loving God and our neighbor.
- learn to give value to studies as an opportunity to prepare well for tomorrow's work.

### Introductory activity

**Materials:** posters and markers for each group

#### Role Play:

Imagine that you were invited by the Ministry of Education to contribute to the drafting of educational programs, and you can modify some of the activities that are held in your classroom.

#### Reflect in small groups:

- What topics are not dealt with in school, but seem important to strengthen the commitment of young people as citizens of a just and peaceful world? *(Choose up to three topics)*
- What activities would you like to include in the study program to deepen these topics? *(suggest an activity to do at school for each topic chosen)*



### Music

- What goals / skills – which will be useful also for your future - could you attain through these new suggestions?

Each working group prepares a poster by presenting its idea graphically and synthetically, and then presents their work to the entire group (which represents the Ministry of Education).

The whole group can vote for the best proposal presented.

#### Songs

We remind the Italians of the following songs

*“La Scuola rende liberi”*

<https://youtu.be/pwZhM3U2Kukk>

(The “FENIX CULTURE” Association in collaboration with the “Don Peppe Diana” Institute of Acerra (province of Naples), inspired by the famous “mane e mane” of @Enzoavitabile, composed a HYMN that represents the values of freedom, acceptance and solidarity as expressed by the school)

*“CIOÈ”*

<https://youtu.be/JTDhOP6k2SQ>

Text by Mario Gardini, music by Carlo Maria Arosio, with Chiara, Riccarda and all the children of the Piccolo Coro TAB on the topic of interrogation.

*“Il voto più alto”*

(The highest grade)

Daniele Ricci

<https://youtu.be/XN7ogyvrRe0>



## EPISODES FROM CHIARA'S STORY

### “I will be your teacher”

Mumbai (India), January 14, 2001

**Question of a Gen3: “For many of us God is only God, the Creator of everything. Do you want to tell us about your relationship with Him? Who is God for you?”**

**Chiara:** “I’ll now explain to you who is God for me. Certainly for me too, as for you, God is my Creator. But maybe I understand something else that I will tell you now. You know that, from time to time, there are charisms and gifts that God sends us, that the Holy Spirit sends us. Now let me tell you how a charism works and how this charism that God gave to us helped me understand who God is.

I was the age of Gen 3 or Gen 2. I had finished high school and wanted to go to university. But I was poor and didn’t have the money, it was a bad time for my family. So I joined a contest to study in a university for free. I wanted to go to a Catholic university, because I had one great desire within me: to understand who God is, what

he is like, what he thinks, I wanted to penetrate him. Then I thought: surely, in a Catholic university they will teach me who God is. But, because of a circumstance, I was not admitted to that university.

So I went home to my mother and I began to cry desperately. I was discouraged, it seemed to me that everything has fallen apart, because I could not get to know who God is. My mother consoled me and said to me: “You’ll see, Chiara ....” But I could not be consoled and I continued to cry. At a certain moment I felt as if someone in my heart was telling me: “I will be your teacher”, meaning to say: “I myself will teach you who God is, I myself will teach you”. I understood that it was Jesus in me who spoke to me. I wiped away my tears immediately and stood up. To my mother, who didn’t understand what had happened, I said: “Thank you, thank you!” and I waited for Him to teach me who God is. This is what a charism means: somehow God talks to

you and gives you the strength to do what he tells you.

Then you know that over the years the war took place. You’ve never seen the war, but it’s terrible: bombs fall, houses jump in the air, people die and the trees are uprooted ... Even in my city, Trent, there was the war. Like other girls, I had my ideals, because by then we had become a small group. I remember that one of my companions wanted at all costs to have a nice house, but a bomb destroyed it.

Another said: “I am getting married, I will have a beautiful family, we will have many children”, but her boyfriend was at war and he never came back, because he died under the bombs.

I also thought, “I want to study philosophy, I want to know so many things,” but the war didn’t let me go to university. So we said to each other, “Did you see? All our desires fall into pieces. We cannot live for these earthly ideals, like a house, like a marriage or studies.” And we asked ourselves: “But could there be an ideal that no bomb can destroy?” And I understood that the Teacher was teaching me, saying: “Yes, Chiara, it is me. The ideal that you must follow is God.”

He told it inside me and specified one thing: “Your ideal will be God, God who is Love”. It was the Teacher who was

beginning to talk to me and letting me know God: God was Love, so he was not only my creator, He was Love.

I can’t tell you what happened around us: life has changed. Before, we only had the love for our father, mother, brothers and sisters and friends, but, from that moment on, we discovered that God followed us everywhere, that he helped us, that he was behind everything that happened. It was as if we had been orphans before and now, instead, we had found the Father.

Later we discovered the proof that God is love: the Word of God became incarnate, Jesus came to earth. And look, we were all bad on earth, but He loved us first and died for us, for our salvation. He opened up Heaven to us and made us understand how important we are to God, because he sent his love, he sent him down to earth.

And now we understand that if we are so important to God, you are also important to me and I am important to you, so we must love each other.

Over the years I have understood many other things, but it is enough for you to know that God is Love and that in everything that happens to you, behind it, there is always the love of God that guides all things.”



## "STUDY TIME, A MASTERPIECE"

Chiara Lubich at the meeting of the young men and women considering the vocation of the focolarini: Castel Gandolfo, April 13, 2001

Question: "Chiara, many of us spend most of the day at work. Can you tell us how you envision work and the importance we should give to this aspect of our life so that it too can be an expression and consequence of having put God in the first place?"

**Chiara:** It's very simple. You should not work, or for many of you, you should not study, or work, because you like it, because it gives you a sense of satisfaction, because it brings in money, because it makes you efficient, so demanded by today's world - we have to be efficient, they tell us, otherwise we are nothing - not for any of these reasons, but in order to do the will of God.

I always remember my last hour of studying, which was my work at the time - I was a university student, and I had to study geography. I always remember this experience because it was quite special. I was sitting on a mat on the floor in Piazza Cappuccini with a map and my notes spread out in front of me. And I thought to myself, "Now I want to do the will of God really well during this hour" - I had no idea it would be the last time I would study, I just wanted to do it well in order to do the will of God. So I learned one thing, I repeated it until I knew it by heart; then I went on to another thing...doing that perfectly, too, and I really experienced perfect joy in my heart. And that was my last hour of studying.

I did the will of God. However, just as I had done the will of God in that moment, of course, I have to do it in other things as well, not only in studying, but also in speaking with the pope, in preparing meals, in cleaning the house, in going to Mass... If we do the will of God well in one thing, we do it well in other things, too. It's logical, it's logical!

This is why I said that it's a very simple answer. Don't work in order to be efficient, or because it is personally rewarding, because you make money, because you like it. Do it in order to do the will of God. I didn't study because I liked geography, even though I did like it, and then I really learned it well traveling all over the world! I gave up geography and I got to know the whole world!

There's a quiz program on television before the evening news. When there is a question on geography, we usually guess the answer, always, almost always. What's the capital of Venezuela? And we answer: Caracas! I think it's all the result of that hour in which I studied geography in order to do the will of God."



## I LEARNED TO STUDY

Gen 3 Girls' Congress (9-12 years old)

Castelgandolfo, June 6, 1996

**Dori,** Dori, one of Chiara's first companions, tells us:

(...) At that time I was studying. You should know that when I met Chiara she told me that she was a teacher, giving private lessons to many students because she was very good, very intelligent, very capable. Then I told her that, since I didn't study, I had lost a year at school and so I had to repeat that class. When Chiara heard about it, she asked me: why don't you want to resume the year you lost? I can give you lessons in all the subjects and you can do two years in one. In the end you can take the exam and finish your studies.

I was very happy because

Chiara told me so, and I didn't see any difficulty. I thought: God is Love and I want to do what he wants from me, so I'll do this too. His love reality pushed me to do everything.

But ... there was one thought: up until then, although I was a student, I liked going to school to be with my companions, talking about many things, playing, fantasizing, reading books ... On the other hand, I didn't like to study and above all in certain subjects I was terrible, especially in Latin. One day Chiara gave me to do a translation from Italian into Latin. I did it, because I always did it. But when she returned, the notebook was more red than black, it was full of corrections, like when everything is wrong. But to

tell the truth I was also used to these things, because for me it was always like this. Then on the other page of the notebook, Chiara had written: "As you can see, it's not good. If you don't study, I don't promise to prepare you for the exam. I also promised your parents to help you study - many times in fact the professors had said that I didn't study - but, Chiara continued, if you don't study, you don't do the will of God, and if you don't do the will of God it is not true that you love God."

It was a tragedy, because I had just discovered that God is Love and that I could love this almighty Father. And now Chiara told me that to love this God who loved me I had to study Latin! I didn't expect it, it was just a tragedy.

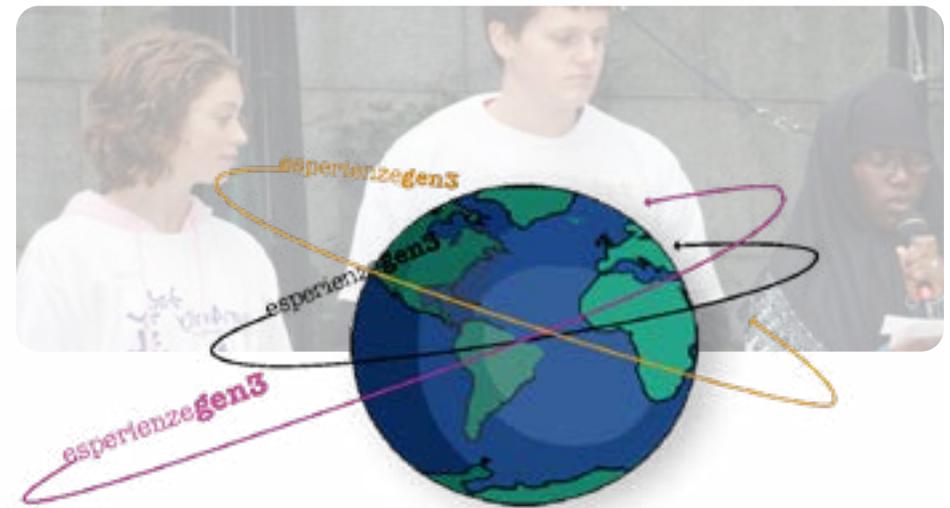
But since I wanted to live a divine adventure, I started to study. In those days a story came to my mind that I had heard a long time ago, I don't remember from whom, who said that once there was a young man who lived in the countryside. He did not work in the farm together with his parents, but he sewed clothes. One day he said: "I don't like to stay here all my life sewing, I would like to do something beautiful." Then he thought: "I will go to a convent because there are so many brothers there. They sing praises to God, they help the poor, they live together, they share so many beautiful things ..." And so he went to the convent. After a while that he was in the convent, his superiors told him to sew. So he thought to himself: "But was it worth it that I left my house to come here, if they still put

me to sew?" But they had explained to him that it was God's will for him to sew, it was to love God. Then this young friar made an agreement with God and told him: "Well, I will sit here every day to sew, but you, my God, promise me that for every stitch I make, you will take a soul to Heaven." And it was told that when he went to Heaven he found so many souls as many as his stitches.

So I told Jesus: "Listen Jesus, I start to study well, but you save so many souls, bring so many souls to heaven." And I started studying.

However, after a quarter of an hour I wanted to eat an apple, but I said, "No, I have to study", and I put a folder near the notebook where I wrote a cross sign. After a while I thought: "Now I'm going to look a little out of the window to see who passes by ... no, I have to study," then I made another cross sign. Then I went a little further: "Maybe I could read the magazine a little ...". And immediately: "No, I'm going to study", and in short, I was doing marking so many crosses. Then I counted them and said: "Jesus, you think about these, I will not think about it anymore."

And so, just to love Jesus, out of love for so many people to go to Heaven, I learned to study, I started to gain more."



## ITALY

I was experiencing a conflictual relationship with my family: for a week we were like in a trench: we "shot" at everything and the reason was the school. I am one of those who usually study to have the "minimum wage". I wanted to go out every afternoon and do lots of activities, instead my parents wanted me to concentrate on studying.

Since I went on with my usual attitude, one day they told me a categorical "No!" and closed me up at home to study. Finding myself in this situation, I opened my books and learned something too!

During that time of punishment, one classmate told me that his parents are always out and that's why at home he is peaceful and plays on the computer, watches TV, never studies.

I felt like exclaiming: "Blessed are you!" Then, that same day, there was an exam and I got a passing grade of 6 and a half, while my classmate got a failing grade of 2. On my way back to home I reflected and understood that my parents didn't want to punish me, but to encourage me to study. I realized that whatever



they tell me, even if I don't understand it at the moment and may seem absurd to me, is important and is useful for my future.

When I got home and saw my mother in the kitchen preparing lunch, I ran to hug her and immediately started talking to her. It was my way of saying thank you.

## GERMANY

I offered to sit next to a classmate who had a hard time following the Biology lessons; I wanted to help him understand the explanations and encourage him during the oral examinations.

In fact, I realized that, although he knew the right answers, he was often so insecure that he could not speak and therefore could not give the answer.

After a while his grades improved and, since he had also a hard time in Chemistry, we used the same technique for this other subject as well.

Seeing the positive effect of my help, another classmate asked the teacher to sit next to me, on the empty side of the desk.

Not only did my teacher consent, but he adopted this "strategy" to help the most troubled boys, all of whom are now seated beside someone who can help them.

# STUDENTS' DECALOGUE <sup>1</sup>

*“The student’s weapon is Jesus Forsaken, who made himself ignorant to give us the answer to all our why’s”:*

At school too, let us entrust ourselves to Jesus Forsaken who became man like us, taking even ignorance upon himself. Jesus placed himself on our same level and understands our doubts and difficulties.

Let us take advantage of all the opportunities that God gives us to recognize and love Jesus Forsaken in the other, in his difficulties.

*The student should thirst more for wisdom than for science. He knows that the truth is Christ who said: “I am the Truth”*

## **13-17 year olds**

The Decalogue was written by Chiara 60 years ago. It is rich in wisdom, but the language is no longer that of today.

We invite the Gen3 to update it starting from their experience at school and using words that are more comprehensible today.

We encourage everyone to work with the wisdom that comes from Jesus in the midst!

Then it would be important to try to put it into practice for a couple of months and after having corrected it with life and experience, send your proposals to:

**centro.rpu@focolare.org**

Thank you.



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<sup>1</sup> In 1959, in addition to the St. Catherine Center for the world of politics and the St. Luke Center for the world of medicine, the St. John Bosco Center was born for the world of education, which brings together teachers and educators, and the St. Ignatius Center for students. Chiara, on that occasion, gave 10 pointers for educators and 10 pointers for students (known as the Student’s Decalogue) See attachment.

