

Precursillo

Introduction

The Cursillo Movement method is divided into three stages or phases, Precursillo, Cursillo, and Postcursillo, which form a perfect unity. For the Movement to be authentic and achieve its purpose, the Method must be applied as a whole and consistent with the specific purpose of each phase.

The Cursillo Movement method comprises:

- The *Precursillo* is an essential phase that facilitates friendship with the person and an opportunity to inform them that God loves them.
- The *Cursillo* is an essential phase that facilitates the person's freedom to encounter the Spirit of God and a desire to live what is fundamental to being Christian.
- The *Postcursillo* is an essential phase that enables the person to live constantly what they experienced in the Cursillo through God's grace, friendship, and ongoing conversion.

The unity and integrity of the three phases are fundamental for the purpose of the Cursillo Movement: to enable the person to experience what is fundamental to being Christian in his concrete reality and, therefore, transform their environments through friendship.

Cursillos' method is based on a kerygma. Kerygma is a Greek word meaning proclamation, the first announcement of the "Good News" that transforms and brings a person to the decision to entrust himself or herself to Jesus Christ by faith. That proclamation requires individuals who are living, Spirit-filled witnesses of the good news. It requires Christians who, with every word and their very lives (lives of faith, hope, and charity), proclaim the greatest of all possible news:

God loves you! Christ came into the world for you! Christ is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" for you! (Christifidelis Laici, no. 34).

Understanding the Precursillo

One of the first objectives of the Precursillo is to befriend people and to prepare them to encounter themselves, Christ, and others. The Precursillo phase is vital for the evangelizing effectiveness of the method. It is a vital phase that encourages and prepares the person through an offer of friendship for an encounter with self, Christ, and others in the Cursillo Weekend experience so that the person might live a new life according to this triple encounter, which continues in the Postcursillo.

The Precursillo generates the Cursillo Weekend, which generates the Postcursillo, which generates the Precursillo phase anew. [Refer to the diagram on the last page of this document.]

Precursillo is not necessarily for all our friends to go to a Cursillo. The Precursillo and the whole Movement are there for our friends to discover that God loves them!

From the beginning in Cursillo, we understand that it is not about doing our best to invite people to attend a Cursillo Weekend but about becoming friends with them to make them friends with Christ.

Every apostolic plan in Cursillo must be Prayed For, Planned, and Perfected.

a. *The Precursillo Requires Prayer*

- Prayer is the first and most important necessity for a Three Day Cursillo. We cast our nets and put in the labor; however, the Lord makes the catch.
- The first step is to place the Precursillo, the candidates, and our apostolic action in the hands of the Lord. Prayer must prevail over all the activities of the Precursillo. The sponsors must solicit prayers and Palanca from their Group Reunions, the Ultreyas, and other Cursillistas.

b. *The Precursillo Requires Planning*

- Trust nothing to improvisation. There must be a plan; we cannot make up things as we go. That is why, in the Cursillo Movement, apostolic plans are initiated in Group Reunions. It is a plan that begins in the Gospel. It is the commandment of Jesus: to love God and our neighbor.
- One of the setbacks in Cursillo is that we work on Precursillo only in the weeks just before the Cursillo Weekend. We are not always looking at the person through the lens of friendship; sometimes, we look for a candidate, another body for the Weekend.
- Experience tells us that in 3-4 months, there is enough time for personal contact with the potential candidate. This way, when the Cursillo Weekend approaches, all the candidates have met with their sponsor and the team leaders. Sponsors prepare the candidate for Cursillo and ensure the Rector or Rectora and team leaders have the appropriate and necessary information about the candidates.
- Experience tells us that a Cursillo Weekend organized one or two months in advance is a Cursillo where you usually must work against the clock to have a good group of candidates. And the leaders use the lack of time to justify that the Cursillo Weekend is worth having even if there are only a few candidates.
- When we apply the Precursillo according to its purpose, and the sponsors, as well as the team leaders, know the candidates/friends well (not just by phone, email, social media, or on the first night of the Cursillo), then the work of the table groups at the Cursillo Weekend will turn out quite positive since they met prior to the Cursillo.

c. *The Precursillo Requires Perfection*

- The founder once said, “*Things are not good enough when they could be better. An idea is tested only through action.*” (Structure of Ideas)
- According to the Founder, planning and perfecting the Precursillo is crucial. Someone has said that history is a great teacher. If we have done something incorrectly, it places us on the road to improve our work. In other words, if we have done something that is not, according to Cursillo, there is an opportunity to correct it to improve it.
- Precursillo is about becoming friends with the candidates; therefore, we offer all our prayers, enthusiasm, and love to help them see that with Cursillo, they can find real meaning in life.

Candidate Selection

Precursillo requires an apostolic attitude, a candidate, an approach, and criteria.

a. *Apostolic Attitude*

Precursillo is an apostolate, and the apostolate is an attitude. It is an attitude in the life of anyone who claims to be Christian. We bring the Good News to as many people as possible. It is necessary for us to have a good apostolic attitude to accomplish a good Precursillo, a good Cursillo Weekend, and a good Postcursillo. Our attitude should be to witness our faith in Christ in our everyday living. This will lead us, without seeking it, to continuous apostolic action, which will naturally flow into Precursillo.

Therefore, the consequence will be to influence our environment, and someone will eventually wonder why we are the way we are, why we love, why we forgive, why we smile, why we hug, etc. Then we can tell others about our faith depending on the moment, the person, and the circumstances. We can tell them what we discovered in our Cursillo, that we believe in Christ and that He gives meaning to our life. It is important to allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit since God invites the person to Cursillo. We add our small grain of sand and respect God's will and the person's freedom.

Our everyday outlook focuses not on a specific person but on the person God places in our path.

If our outlook is based on faith and prayer, the Precursillo will become part of our lives. It will just flow from our inner being, and without realizing it, we will complete all the steps naturally and with common sense. The Precursillo must be the work of all Cursillistas, not only for the team of the next Cursillo Weekend.

b. *The Person (Candidate)*

We do not select people, God does, but he works through us. It is the Spirit who helps us discover the face of Christ in the person. Cursillo values the diversity of candidates, as it is the person that matters most.

We must be attentive to the person to discover whether they are receptive to change. If the person is open, start an apostolic plan and speak to him about Cursillo directly, depending on the circumstances. There can be three types of responses from the person: Negative, Indifferent, or Positive.¹

Negative. If someone reacts negatively during a conversation, it could indicate feeling uncomfortable. It's best to change the subject naturally while remaining polite and friendly. This will help demonstrate that Christianity is about normal people with normal lives who are happier. With the right attitude, a potential apostolic failure can be turned into an apostolic success.

Indifferent. In this case, it is important to provide more information about Cursillo and only bring up the topic again if the person is receptive.

¹ Structure of Ideas Book

Positive. When someone shows interest, it is a sign to start Precursillo (apostolic plan) immediately.

Errors of Selecting a Special Type of Person

Targeting a specific type of person can result in the following:

- Selecting the easiest.
- Selecting the most difficult.
- Selecting family members only.
- Selecting the person with social status.

The Charism of Cursillo does not target a specific type of group. Cursillo strives for diversity.

c. The Approach

Establishing a friendship with someone before sending them to Cursillo is important. This allows you to understand their character, capacity for friendship, and humility.

The approach should lead us to determine WHEN the friend is ready to attend the Cursillo Weekend. The community of Cursillistas, who are behind the scenes, offer prayers and Palanca for the candidates and team.

Avoiding certain errors when inviting people to a Cursillo is important. Here are some things to keep in mind:

Improvisation: If you haven't planned properly, you may end up with just bodies instead of friends attending the Cursillo.

Pressure: It's never okay to coerce or manipulate someone into attending a Cursillo. We must always respect the freedom of the person.

Deception: If your goal is to get as many people as possible to attend a Cursillo without truly caring about building real friendships, you'll likely experience no follow-up in the Postcursillo.

Self-deception: Sometimes, we can deceive ourselves and invite someone who may not be ready or willing to attend. It's important to be honest with ourselves about the circumstances in the person's life.

We should want the candidate's freedom and enthusiasm to motivate them to attend the Cursillo Weekend. The Charism of Cursillo is meant to be attractive, not imposing.

The love of God and neighbor inspires sponsors to bring others to Christ. Saint Augustin reminds us: *"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."*

If the sponsor focuses solely on filling up the next Cursillo Weekend because they have only a few candidates, then pride can cloud their judgment and cause them to forget the true purpose of Precursillo, sponsoring, and friendship.

Sometimes, the best time for the sponsors to talk to their candidates is while their Group Reunion is in front of the Tabernacle so that God will enlighten the sponsor with the right words at the right time.

d. Criteria for the Selection

The “far away” are a priority in searching for and selecting candidates in the Precursillo. The kerygmatic character of the Cursillo Movement, in which the first announcement of the Good News is made, is addressed preferably, though not exclusively, to those who live far away from Christ, the Gospel, and the Church and Christian virtues. To know the faraway person, we must approach them through friendship.

Considering the purpose of the Cursillo Movement, the sponsors select the candidates according to the person’s:

Personality: The founder explains that personality means having a capacity for conviction, determination, and perseverance. Their personality must be deep (profound). (Structure of Ideas & 100 Years: Biography and Mentality) People with good values, sound judgment, and a capacity to love.

To have personality is to remember that we are a person in every circumstance. The person is the reflection, the expression, and the splendor of God’s specific plan for the human being. Being a person is reality; always open to becoming more of a person and a better person.²

The Cursillo Movement helps people discover their value and capacity to love and be loved.

Condition: it must be clean or cleanable (capable of being clean). By cleanable, we understand it to be a condition that is not clean, which would depend on the person’s will to counteract it [to act against or put a stop or an end to the condition]. (Structure of Ideas)

Prudence and charity demand special attention toward people to whom the Cursillo would not bring benefits or solutions. When a person lacks maturity or is hindered by illness or vice, their mind will not focus on the Cursillo. In such cases, handling the situation with kindness and understanding is important.

If we understand and live in the Precursillo, we will not be looking to bring someone to Cursillo; instead, we will be *making a friend, being a friend, and making our friend, a friend of Christ.*

² Eduardo Bonín Aguiló 100 Years Biography and Mentality

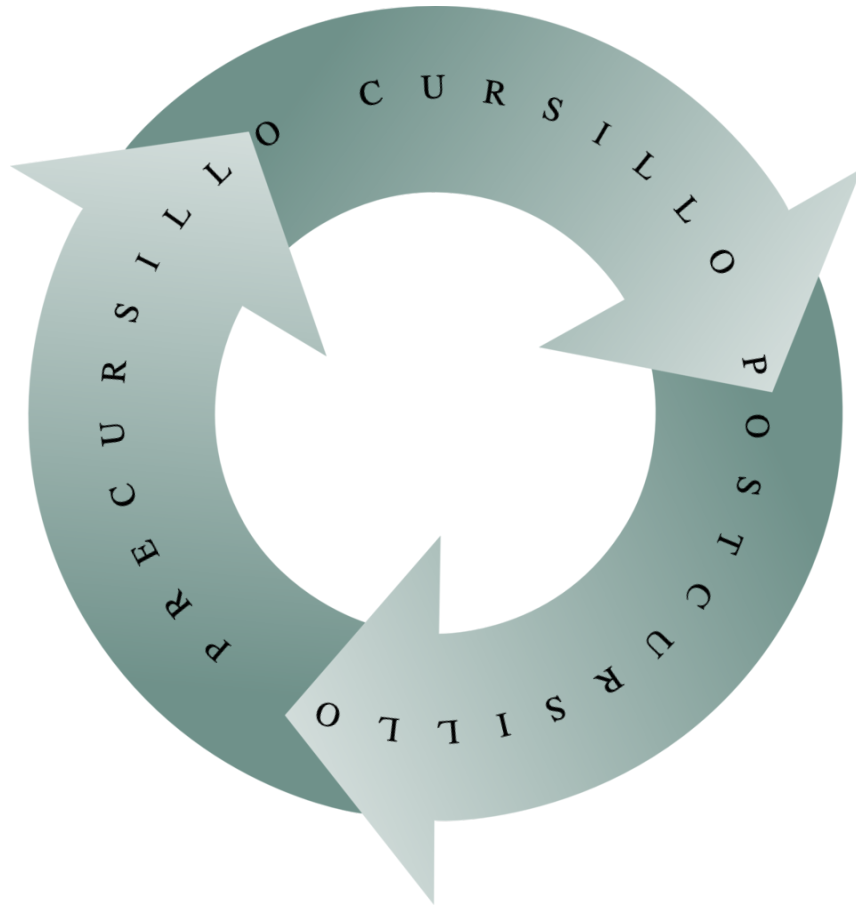
Sponsors

The Precursillo includes a process of selection and preparation of candidates, with the holy intention that the labor will produce a good and bountiful harvest. A good and abundant harvest depends on God's plans and the person's freedom. But the Sower's work (sponsor/friend) is crucial. The Sower must prepare the ground and take care of the seed. The seed will grow with the fullness of life if it falls on fertile ground. Therefore, sponsor education is also of crucial importance.

A sponsor is a friend willing and able to accompany the candidate throughout the entire method: the Precursillo, Cursillo, and Postcursillo. The sponsor must read the Sponsor's Booklet to understand his responsibilities, and the candidate should be given a copy of the Cursillo, What is it Booklet. The Diocesan Secretariat should provide a Sponsors Orientation to educate Cursillistas in their role as sponsors. The Regional Coordinator can provide a copy of the Sponsor's Orientation and assist with the workshop if needed.

In Closing

The Cursillo Movement has a unique method to bring people into a relationship with self, Christ, and others in three days. To bring a person to the Cursillo Weekend should not depend so much on our desire but on the will and freedom of the person to self-examine. Let us help the person overcome his fears, but let it be his enthusiasm that has the last word.



Three Phases, One Cursillo Method

The Precursillo generates the Cursillo Weekend, the Cursillo Weekend generates the Postcursillo, and the Postcursillo generates the Precursillo anew.