

Rector's Guide: A Step-by-Step Guide for the Cursillo Weekend
Frequently Asked Questions - FAQ

General Questions – Music – Thursday – Friday – Saturday – Sunday

General Questions

1. What was the procedure followed in the writing of the Rector's Guide and Lay Rollos for the Cursillo Weekend?

The original Rector's Guide and Lay Rollos were written by our Founder, Eduardo Bonnín. These documents have been, and are currently being used by the Cursillo Movement in Mallorca. A team of dedicated Cursillistas (from the United States and Canada) have been working for several years on translating these documents to English. During this time, a process of cross-checking each other's work and clarifications with Mallorca leaders was incorporated to make certain that the translations are faithful to the Founder's original intentions.

2. We have always called the individuals living the weekend Candidates, but now the literature refers to those individuals as Cursillistas. What is the purpose of this change?

The term Cursillista should be thought of as an individual who is experiencing the journey with Jesus. This journey begins on Thursday of the Cursillo Weekend and throughout one's life in their Fourth Day ending with the Fifth Day. Based on this understanding, a person is a Candidate during the Precursillo, but becomes a Cursillista when they begin the Cursillo on Thursday evening, not when they complete the weekend at the Clausura.

3. The anecdotes have changed. What is the purpose of the anecdotes?

“The Cursillo is filled with simple examples, that we went searching for here and there, that are very pedagogical [educational] and serve to help people delve more deeply. The Cursillo is nothing more than encoded common sense.”¹

For example, the Skiing Trip is noted on page 103 of An Apprentice Christian, which states “all this for me” is so that the cursillista will be encouraged to take advantage of the Cursillo of understanding how deep and true this phrase can be for them.

The Story of John shows the relationship with the Lord is a relationship of friendship, that the Lord likes humble people who pray with their heart, the naturalness of visiting the tabernacle in everyday life, and that the Lord is with us when we need Him, no matter where we are. Particularly after the Study Rollo, one may think they need to be very intelligent to be Christian, when in fact this story emphasizes the “heart” is what is important and not the head or mind.

The Last Will and Testament of an Elderly Man anecdote is that of making a commitment. We must also remember that not only the anecdotes, but every moment of the weekend serves a purpose.

¹ An Apprentice Christian pg. 102

4. *Why is there no free time scheduled?*

While the Cursillo Weekend is designed to foster a change in the cursillista - a metanoia – we must be ever watchful that the weekend does not become in any way manipulative or overwhelming. This requires a vigilance and commitment that the Cursillista has the freedom whether or not to accept that which is offered on the Cursillo Weekend.

Integral to this freedom is the time to reflect and absorb the messages of the weekend as well as the time to make friends, and the time to be restful.

In order to accomplish this goal, flexibility is given to table members after a Rollo for Rollo discussions, summaries, posters, and breaks – there is a rhythm to the weekend, with a block of time usually 2 hours for each Rollo segment, which includes the Rollo, time for discussion and poster, and free time. This is not divided into individual parts but is rather given as a block so as to allow the participants to use the time as they see fit.

5. *What is meant by “brightening the atmosphere”?*

Through a childhood song or a simple joke before some of the Rollos, especially the “key” Rollos, one achieves an atmosphere that helps to make the Rollo yield more and better fruit. On the other hand, we must be careful not to tire the Cursillistas out with this preparation, because the only thing that is sought here is to relax them.²

The Cursillo climate is formed by an accumulation of details. A tone of joy should be given to the whole (especially on the part of the leaders) by means of: jokes, songs, and witticisms that entertain, relax and prepare the Cursillistas. And each person should be given a feeling of friendship through the act of knowing them by their name, being solicitous without being boring, and opening up their heart.³

6. *Are we really supposed to expect people of a certain age to skip rope or play soccer? Is it really a “break” if it is a planned activity?*

This may seem strange to our American mindset, but this practice too has a well thought out and psychologically sound basis. The rationale for this is that it is another way that Cursillistas can let down their defenses. Of course, they may be hesitant at first (who in their 40s and 50s uses a jump rope on a regular basis or plays ball or street hockey?), but it is intended to reach the person at a deep level, behind all the masks and walls that we all put up to shield or protect ourselves. It creates laughter and a childlike reaction to the fun, assisting in opening the person to the grace that God wants to pour into their hearts.

This game time does not replace corridor work but provides a reason to interact. It is a psychological thing. Choice is allowed here; we should make available such things as basketballs, frisbees, hula-hoops, and paddle balls to provide energy release of those that are younger and bocce, beanbag games, and puzzles for those who are less active. Of course, the Cursillista has the freedom to choose whether or not to participate.

² Structure of Ideas pg. 59

³ Structure of Ideas pg. 52

7. *Didn't the United States Cursillo do away with jokes when things got out of hand at some weekends?*

While we must take caution with jokes, as some are too lax with what is "appropriate", this is all part of "livening the environment,"⁴ and should be allowed. "*Jokes in the dining room and the attention we have given you are only so that you might find yourself*"⁵

8. *Is there a specified time for reconciliation?*

It should be announced, and repeated often, that priests are available for reconciliation or Spiritual Direction at any time. Sometimes a Cursillista's contact with a Spiritual Advisor during a free time block, like after meal, may make a profound difference.

9. *Do the cursillistas work on posters all day?*

A single block of time is given after a Rollo to allow flexibility to table members to respond in their own way for Rollo discussions, summaries, posters and breaks. They may circle-back during the day at any time to work on the poster.

It is important to remember that the posters are only being used as a medium for interaction. Conversion and conversation are more important than catechesis. Discussion is more important than content.

10. *How many posters are made?*

One poster (5 drawings) per day on Friday and Saturday only.

11. *Is the Spiritual Advisor to lead grace at all meals?*

Yes, if available. If a Spiritual Advisor is not available, then grace should be led by the Rector. Having a Cursillista who is far away lead grace may put them in an uncomfortable position.

12. *Do all team members go to the Chapel with the Rollista to pray, leaving the Cursillistas unattended?*

Yes, all of the team, including the Spiritual Advisor if available, go to the chapel; the Cursillistas are left alone. We must remember that this is a brief prayer.

*"Before beginning, the Rollista goes to the Blessed Sacrament in order to ask for effective words and to offer his efforts. Everything in the Cursillo is a work of Grace...and Grace is conditioned by prayer; 'Ask and you will receive'."*⁶

⁴ Structure of Ideas pg. 52

⁵ An Apprentice Christian pg. 103

⁶ Structure of Ideas pg. 58

13. What is the Morning Offering?

This is a simple prayer that can be found in the Pilgrim's Guide on pages 17-20.

14. Do team members go to do palanca in the chapel?

They should not. *"If the leaders do not attend all the Rollos, they cannot thoroughly understand the individual, since they do not know the truths that he has gained or those that he should have gained."*⁷

In addition, the team members' absences may distract from the message of the Rollo. *"Inexcusable absences are more noticeable than disturbing presences. And both are regrettable."*⁸

A Rollista may wish to have a member of the outside community do palanca during an appointed time, but it would be outside of the place where Cursillo is being held.

15. Can we change the times?

Sequence and time allocation **should not** be changed. While some changes may be necessary due to circumstances beyond our control, the amount of time allocated for Rollos, table discussion, corridor work, posters, and visits to Blessed Sacrament should be the last ones to be compromised and every effort should be made to keep the sequence described.

We must be certain to respect the order of things. *"The method of Cursillo, in the particular fellowship of three days, in the guideline of a closed retreat, was prayed upon, thought upon, planned, studied and structured with miniscule attention."*⁹

*"I gave proper order to the rollos throughout the three days, taking care that in the evenings one would be left for last that [which] had highlighted things. Everything is calculated so that whoever goes, with good intentions, can turn their personality around, and be turned inside out like a sock. This is called metanoia."*¹⁰

16. Are only the Rector and Spiritual Advisor not part of any Table Group?

Yes. As team we must remember that it is more important to have contact with the cursillistas than with each other. *"It is necessary above all to know each of the Cursillistas in order to be able to give them the exact truth, at the right moment."*¹¹

⁷ Structure of Ideas pg. 53

⁸ Structure of Ideas pg. 54

⁹ Study of the Charism 2013 revised edition pg.105, (2010 edition pg. 64)

¹⁰ An Apprentice Christian pg. 102

¹¹ Structure of Ideas pg.35

17. Why are Rollistas not formally introduced?

All Rollistas are introduced simply by first name. Example: "The next Rollo is given by_____." This is reoccurring each day with each Rollo as noted in Appendix 1A.

As the day progresses the atmosphere becomes more friendly and informal, so that one-to-one contact and the Rollistas' life witness is the method by which the Cursillistas will come to know more about each Rollista.

18. How do we gain the attention of the room to begin the next Rollo?

The simplicity of ringing a bell is used for gathering. Also, Simple silly songs are one of the methods we can use to gather or gain attention. The Rollista may also begin with a joke, if needed. The goal here is the "brightening of the atmosphere" to "ease and positively predispose the attitude of the Cursillistas."

*"Through songs and jokes before each Rollo - especially the "key" Rollos - one achieves an atmosphere that will make the rollo yield more and better fruit. Be careful not to tire the Cursillistas out with this preparation, because the only thing that is sought is to relax them."*¹²

19. Are team members supposed to meet with Cursillistas prior to the weekend?

Yes, that would be a good practice. As applications come in, team members could meet maybe once or twice with Cursillistas to know them before the weekend. It is part of Precursillo for a team member. It is a new practice for many of us in the United States. Cursillistas may also be invited to Ultreya before the weekend.

20. What is the purpose of the Hobbies Sheet?

The Hobbies sheet is used for dialogue – corridor work, common interests, ice breakers, and possibly roster information.

21. What happens to Hobbies sheets after the weekend?

Like palanca, they are destroyed at the end of the weekend.

22. Is there a nightly rosary?

No, a rosary is not essential in a Cursillo weekend, The rosary is a personal devotion that each Cursillista can embrace in total freedom as part of their spiritual life in their 4th Day. However, a Rosary is in the schedule on Mary's day, Saturday.

¹² Structure of Ideas pg. 59

Music

1. Is there supposed to be a song verse prior to each Rollo? I am not sure I understand the concept of initiating the “silly” songs before the Rollos.

No, it is not necessary to have a song before every Rollo if the environment is already lively. The Rector should determine if a song is needed to liven the environment or not. Simple silly songs (see description below) are one of the methods to gather attention,

The goal here is the “brightening of the atmosphere” to “ease and positively predispose the attitude of the cursillistas.”

2. What is meant by “silly songs” and what is the point of just singing these “silly songs”?

Silly songs are simple, repetitive songs to create a light-hearted atmosphere, “to clear our heads and warm up the atmosphere.” They serve as a short break. These are songs everyone would probably know so that the far away would know the tune, have heard them before, are comfortable joining in and do not require a songbook. Avoid hymns; use secular songs, nothing pious.

Eduardo Bonnín writes: “*We asked Estarellas to bring songs to Cursillos that were not pious hymns and the one we like best was this one ... (De Colores). (The purpose was) In addition to being expressions of encouragement and emotions, they have been used to detoxify and to oxygenize.*”¹³

3. Are we not supposed to sing De Colores until the second day?

The De Colores song is introduced before the Habitual Grace Rollo after the explanation of its origin. Then it can be sung occasionally on the other days.

4. What is the origin of the De Colores song?

The song De Colores was a Spanish folk song which was popular at the time of the first Cursillos in Mallorca, Spain. A cursillista by the name of Guillermo Estarellas, introduced this song at the request of Eduardo Bonnín (our Cursillo founder), to sing something while the Candidates were waiting on the first day of the weekend for the first spiritual rollo. Some years after it was introduced, another Cursillista saw the parallel between: the colors of the rainbow - and the springtime flowers - and the colors of being in Grace. It became a greeting that the cursillistas used when they met each other, meaning, “is all well with you, are you in Grace?” As Cursillo spread around the world, the song De Colores went with it, simply because it is a well-known Spanish folk song. It was eventually translated into English, however, in many countries, it is still sung in Spanish

¹³ An Apprentice Christian, pg. 106

5. *Wouldn't it be easier to give the Cursillistas song books to help with the music?*

We should attempt to not use Song sheets or song books as learning the songs is all part of engaging the Cursillistas and having some fun. There is a different dynamic when people are trying to learn a song and then joining in.

Having a song book can create an opportunity to get engrossed in singing the song rather than engaging on a personal level with those around you. The book can also become a barrier. On the last day they can be given a book of songs as a memento if this is a practice in your area.

Thursday

1. *What happened to the Team Group Reunion, Eucharist, and dining together?*

While these are all excellent activities, these should happen during the Team Preparation stage of Precursillo prior to the weekend. We should consider a mentality of the weekend before the weekend and on the way to the retreat center. This is different from a previous mentality of the weekend starting after the Cursillistas are "settled in" to their rooms.

Perhaps a meal or snack with the cursillistas could be an option.

2. *Why do the team and cursillistas travel/carpool to the Cursillo location together?*

Although this may seem strange to us there is a very logical and psychologically sound reason for it. It is to welcome the Cursillistas, to give them a sense that they are already a part of something greater than they knew, even at this early point. It creates a friendly atmosphere before they even get to the retreat house.

This format helps to allay some of the fear and hesitation that a cursillista might be feeling. It gives an opportunity for the team to get to know each person in an informal setting and to begin the work of discerning who the cursillistas are and what their attitude is towards God and the upcoming Cursillo. In short, it uses the traveling time to begin the process of befriending the new cursillistas.

3. *Don't the team members get their bags to their rooms ahead of time, so they can help others with their bags?*

Team and Cursillistas are treated equally, not knowing their rooms ahead of time (except the Rector who should arrive early). This will create "organized chaos", which is not a bad thing. It will facilitate much chatting while getting coffee as everyone, team and Cursillistas drop their bags and wait for others to arrive.

As to room assignments: *"It is better, however, for the leaders to sleep in different rooms from the Cursillistas, yet at strategically located points. The reason for this is simple: It is much better if the team meetings are not noticed by the Cursillistas and, if such arrangements were not made, this would be impossible."*¹⁴

¹⁴ Structure of Ideas pg. 54

Thursday (continued)

4. *Do we have to read “Bankruptcy”? We have never seen this before and Bankruptcy is long.*

While the actual text of “Bankruptcy” is new to the United States, the concept of a reflective reading on Thursday evening is not.

“Bankruptcy” may be read by multiple different team leaders (maybe 3). It is read during break or snack time between meditations, so that the reading helps the Cursillistas keep silence comfortably, avoiding speaking due to politeness, shame, or nerves. If avoiding a very late night on Thursday is a concern, the Stations of the Cross may be omitted.

5. *What is the message of “Bankruptcy”?*

The reading is about characters with the desire for money, power and pleasure, and the wasting of time with themes of repentance, forgiveness, hope and a new life in the way of Christ. It helps participants focus on introspection (possibly through identification with one or more of the characters).

The proper place of “Bankruptcy” is preceded by the “Know Thyself” meditation and followed by the meditation of the Prodigal Son. This placement invites the cursillista to an encounter with self the first night.

6. *Is the Examination of Conscience on Thursday night a penance service?*

No. It is an Examination taken directly from Appendix 3 and is separate from Friday or Saturday which is included in the Pilgrims Guide. Examination of one's conscience is a private, individual act. It is not a penance service, which prepares a group for confession and includes the Rite of Penance.

In fact, at no time during the weekend should a “Penance Service” be held. Rather it should be noted, and repeated often, that the Priest is available to anyone at any time during the course of the weekend for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

7. *Won't the first night examination not being the same as other nights be confusing?*

This is not new. At this point in the weekend, the Cursillistas do not have anything to compare this to, since they will not yet have followed the version in the Pilgrim's Guides.

8. *Is there any music at all Thursday evening (De Colores, song practice for liturgy)?*

There is no music; no songs are sung.

Thursday (continued)

9. Should everyone (every Cursillo weekend) have cursillistas serve as Table Heads and Secretaries?

Yes. The rationale is to have cursillistas take ownership of the weekend; it is their weekend, they do the work. There is an explanation and information in Appendix 5 and 11.

10. When are the introductions given?

On Friday morning before assigning candidates to table groups, all (both Team and candidates) are introduced by the Rector reading out their first and last name. Appendix 5 gives an explanation of how to conduct informal introductions where it is referred to as a "Fashion Show". The rationale is to let everyone take notice of the person being introduced, their name and what they look like. This means take a few seconds to let the person stand there and be seen, not stand up and sit down immediately. It is to 'show them off'. Some will stand up and make gestures as if they are famous, etc. they may want to state a "nickname". But it is not a formal introduction like I am a Bank President, etc. we will come to know one another by personal contact throughout the weekend.

Also, remember, each team member should know the first and last name of all the table members of his table group and talk to every one of them on the first day. Emphasis is placed on "corridor work" where the team engage conversation with the candidates throughout the weekend. In addition, Signing of the Pilgrims Guide is used to contact each other on a one-to-one basis if they have not done so previously in the weekend.

11. During Lent the church has music for the Way of the Cross. Why do we not do the same?

We must remember that we are beginning this weekend with the far away, and we do not want to use this time to introduce too many things of which they might not be familiar. The Pilgrims Guide (page 105) provides a simple, concise, in-hand format.

Friday

1. Why are the Heads and Secretaries asked to remain at the Blessed Sacrament with the Team?

"This invitation is to simply say goodnight to the Lord and to help the Table Leaders, Heads and Secretaries take ownership of what is happening at their tables."¹⁵

"The Rector will point out to the Table Heads and the Secretaries that it was the Lord who chose them for this task, to become His instruments at the weekend."¹⁶

¹⁵ Rector's Guide, pg. 12

¹⁶ Rector's Guide Appendix 1F-4

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Saturday

1. *Why is the Saturday Mass not scheduled for after the Sacraments talk?*

The Mass on Saturday should not be used as an opportunity for catechesis. The Mass is celebrated as a normally scheduled Saturday morning daily Mass.

A short visit to the tabernacle is scheduled after the Sacraments Rollo and before lunch.

2. *Isn't this "Fiesta" [Social Gathering] an incidental?*

No, it is part of the "brightening the atmosphere." The word "fiesta" gives a multitude of misleading interpretations open to excess. It is alright to use a different word like: "social gathering" or "fellowship".

It is better to describe what will take place, Reunion of the Table Groups, jokes, games, songs, humorous stories, etc. Something all can participate in is best, like Musical Chairs. Games should be for 4 players or more like *Win, Lose or Draw; Charades; Apples to Apples*.

Sunday

1. *Did we not do away with mañanitas?*

Over the years, our National Secretariat strived to move closer to the Charism through revisions to the Cursillo Manual and other Cursillo literature. As a Movement in the Catholic Church, these revisions followed a path initiated by our Church such as the Vatican II directive *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*.

The accuracy of these revisions was affected by the lack of access to writings by the Founder, its poor translations into English, and adaptations implemented by Diocesan movements seeking to make improvements or discarding revisions they did not understand. As a result, members of the National Staff met with the Founder and discovered that our Movement is to be driven by the Foundational Charism and its criteria versus rules or directives.

The Holy Spirit has drawn us into a deeper friendship with Mallorca and in an association with the Foundation of Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló, FEBA. This friendship has increased our access to the writings of our Founder, deepened our understandings of The Foundational Charism, and improved our translations.

What we have learned is that Eduardo experienced Mañanitas in a Cursillo in Mexico. He returned to Mallorca and introduced the Mañanitas to Cursillos in Mallorca, since as the founder, he and he alone was able to do so.

Mañanitas are a tangible sign for the cursillistas. They can readily see what they have been told; that people are praying and sacrificing for them. Mañanitas are a way for the Cursillistas to touch, with their hands, people they don't know, but are praying for them. Mañanitas in Mallorca have been going on for many years and are part of their Rector's Guide.

Sunday (continued)

2. Why are there visitors in for Group Reunion?

The visitors are cursillistas who are brought into the weekend just before the Total Security Rollo in order to have a group reunion with the new cursillistas. The “Cursillista” visitors ensure that each new cursillista has the opportunity to do this first Group Reunion with someone that they can have contact with, in the days following the weekend. This is especially important, when a new Cursillista is from a remote area and is the only one from that area on the Cursillo weekend, or if there is not a team leader from their area. It also helps to ease the new Cursillistas into the first Ultreya by meeting someone from their area.

No more than three visitors are invited and only if necessary. This decision is usually made BEFORE the Cursillo Weekend when going through the information on the candidates and where they live in comparison to the Team Leaders serving the weekend. We need to keep in mind that the Group Reunion on the third day is not a performance, it is an actual grouping and not a demonstration.

3. When, if ever, do cursillistas participate in the Apostolic Hour?

The new Cursillistas do not participate in the Apostolic Hour. The Apostolic Hour is a Fourth Day community prayer that can be used as a form of prayer and palanca for the new Cursillistas at another location during the Cursillo Weekend, or at other times.

4. During the Clausura, should a “round of applause” be given for the people who have served us in the kitchen over the three days? What about the team?

No, just prior to the Clausura only the team and cursillistas should give a round of applause to the retreat house staff or the kitchen team. There is no applause for the Team Leaders. During the Clausura there is a “round of applause” given to Jesus Christ who is present in the Tabernacle.

5. Who is present at the Clausura that has “...never been to a Cursillo weekend and are attending a Clausura for the first time”?

Some non-Cursillistas may unavoidably be present (like a guest bishop). However, the Clausura is not encouraged as a Precursillo tactic. This might only serve to bewilder possible Cursillistas. An alternative would be to invite them to an Ultreya.

Sunday (continued)

6. *Why are the crucifix and carnet, not mentioned in the Clausura?*

Eduardo's Rector's Guide does not mention a crucifix because it was never part of the original Cursillo Weekend. The crucifix is an addition to the Clausura which eventually became the norm in the US Cursillo. What is essential and what is mentioned in the Guide, is the Service Sheet which is the Cursillista's commitment or pledge of honor to Christ.

7. *Why is there no mention of Exposition, Benediction, Apostolic Hour, or Mass in the Clausura?*

These are not a part of the Clausura.

The focus of Clausura is to live and experience what they have been told in the Rollos of the third day, the witness of living a normal, everyday life with Christ. (See: Appendix 15)

The Mass is not part of the Clausura. Cursillo is not a parish. For the outside community, Sunday Mass is to be celebrated in their own parish.