

During the week at Taizé – Ideas for group-leaders

When you bring a group of young people to Taizé, especially groups which include 15-16 year-olds, there seem to be two main areas where group leaders can help things to go well:

1 – Ensuring *contact* between the group leaders and the young people. (If the group is camping together this is easier.)

2 – Seeing that the young people do not all stick together (at prayers, mealtimes, discussion groups) but find the confidence to explore the week as a *personal experience*.

Here are some practical ideas on how to work on them:

Contact

- Arrange a daily time when you meet briefly with your group, or at least with some of them. Times which work well with the daily programme are: 1:30/45pm (after lunch) or 7:30/45pm (after supper)

- Have a regular time during the day, when the young people know where to find you (for example for an individual talk).

- If some are finding the prayer unengaging, go with them earlier (before the church becomes full) towards the front of the church, so as not to be stuck at the back.

A personal experience

- The group-leaders who are present as “contact people” in the 15-16 year-old group can help at the important moment on Monday morning when the international small groups are formed for the week. Encourage the young people to split up to be with others. Ideally not more than 2 people in a small group should have come together from the same school/group.

- Suggest to the young people in your group, especially to those you see who are showing a tendency to bunch together, to take some steps to set out personally, individually. For example:

* go into midday and evening prayers *individually* not sitting as a group together (Cf. “When you pray, go to your private room ...” Matthew 6:6);

* speak to someone you do not know in the meal-queue;

* at mealtime sit with someone from another country who is in your small international group;

* at tea-time go and sit with people you do not know;

* find one of the group leaders (or one of the brothers/sisters) to talk over some ideas and questions that have come up so far;

* at OYAK, join in a group singing in another language.

* etc.

- Ask the young people to write some words on what the week has meant to them. Give them some questions, maybe even a pre-prepared sheet, to get them started. A time at the end of the week, Saturday or Sunday afternoons, or else during the journey home could be good times to do this writing. Writing something down will help them become more conscious of what they have participated in; it may also give you some quotes to use in “publicity” for future trips.