

2022 "Union with God and Prayer" 2023

Today, I discovered Heaven



**Modularized Gen 4 Program
on "Union with God and Prayer"
year 2022-2023**



Introduction:



To prepare the material, we started by rereading and meditating various themes prepared by Chiara¹ on this topic, highlighting those aspects which seemed to us more suitable for the gen 4. For many of these aspects, there are also specific materials prepared by Chiara herself for this age (ideas from her story and from answers that Chiara gave to the gen 4 over the years).

We have chosen 7 suggested points in consecutive modules, with a program that is also according to the Indigo formation on the Sacred Scriptures which we would like our Gen 4 to undergo.

For each module, we have indicated:

A) some ideas taken from Chiara's themes for the preparation—meditation for the assistants.

B) the objectives that these ideas suggested to us for the gen 4 meeting.

C) some content which can be used to help achieve these objectives, “drops of light” taken from the Sacred Scriptures (Indigo program for the Gen 4) and from the Spirituality (still material for the Gen 4). Specifically,



for every part, we indicate which excerpt from Chiara's story or which of her answers given to the Gen 4 can be used, which episodes in the Sacred Scriptures seem to fit this point. Every episode in the Sacred Scripture which is proposed is also accompanied by illustrated experiences which can be useful material to reinforce the point. D) Finally, through a beautiful collaboration with a team of assistants from all over the world, some ideas for conducting the meeting were also prepared, also to enrich it with songs, games, drawings and various activities.

The type of proposal that we can offer this year, being "modular" and not already structured as in the previous years, can also be more easily adapted to any situation. We are sure that the sensitivity of each assistant would know how to choose, among these proposals, the elements that are more suitable to the group of gen 4 entrusted to him or her. There are plenty of materials, precisely to provide the possibility of choosing: It is NOT necessary to do all of them!

As you will then see, also in the choice of Chiara's themes (to prepare the assistants), talks made for the most varied audiences were sought, in order to have interreligious and ecumenical richness in mind as



much as possible. We would like to remind you that the ecumenical dimension is very much present in all Indigo programs and in the revisions of the passages from the Sacred Scriptures suited to children, as well as in the contributions of the notes accompanying the text; there were contributions from focolarine and focolarini of various Churches.

The general title of the program which we propose for year 2022-2023 is: **Today, I discovered Heaven.**

¹Reference of texts consulted:

C. Lubich, Tokyo (Japan), December 28, 1981, to the members of Rissho Kosei Kai, "La mia esperienza spirituale".

C. Lubich, Faenza, April 10, 1988, to the families, "La preghiera in famiglia".

C. Lubich, to the focolarinos, Castel Gandolfo, December 23, 1988, La "Via Mariae".

C. Lubich, – Collegamento CH, February 23, 1989, "I quattro modi di pregare" (published in: C.Lubich, Cercando le cose di lassù, Rome 1992, 4th ed., p. 128-130).

C. Lubich, Collegamento CH, Mariapoli Luminosa, May 24, 1990, "Vivere il 'Già'" (published in: C. Lubich, Santi insieme, Rome 1995, 3rd ed., (1st ed.: 1994), p. 35-38).

C. Lubich, Castel Gandolfo, December 24, 1998, to the focolarinos, "V° tema della spiritualità collettiva – III° aspetto: 'L'amore eleva'".

C. Lubich, Castel Gandolfo, October 25, 1999, meeting of Muslim friends of the Focolare Movement, "La preghiera, la meditazione e l'unione con Dio".

C. Lubich, Castel Gandolfo, January 4, 2004, to the focolarinos and focolarinas, "L'unione con Dio si sente, si percepisce - La cultura della Risurrezione".

C. Lubich, Castel Gandolfo, February 16, 2004, to the Bishops friends of the Focolare Movement, "L'unione con Dio".

C. Lubich, Castel Gandolfo, April 18, 2004, at the Hindu-Christian Symposium, "L'unione con Dio".



Today I discovered Heaven

Module n. 1:

The Wonder of Creation: There I am, too

God has always thought of us and He accompanies us from the time of creation to “the new heavens and new earths”

A) For the assistants.



Ideas from Chiara's themes: to be in a relationship with God who created us.

1) In order to pray, "to speak with God," I must know that God exists. In 1988, when speaking of prayer in the family, Chiara had emphasized this: "[...] **For children to learn how to pray to God, it is, first of all, necessary that this reality is revealed to them, that they discover His existence. They need to know that He is there [...].**"¹

2) Another point highlighted by Chiara in various themes is how prayer is **important in the life of man, as well as how it is an essential element of man: the relationship with God differentiates man from other creatures. "Man is truly such if he prays."**²

3) This relationship with God is found in various religions. Chiara highlights this "affinity," speaking to different audiences, such as to the Buddhists in 1981, or to the Muslims some years later. Here is an excerpt taken from her talk during the meeting with Muslim friends in Castelgandolfo in 1999. "[...] **Prayer is an essential element in our spiritual life. Without it, there is no true spiritual life. One can live without eating but not without breathing, and prayer is the breath of the soul. I know that I speak to believers in God who know what prayer is. Indeed, it can be said—it seems to me—that Islam is the religion of prayer, not only because it—that which you do five times a day—is one of its five pillars, but also because any verse in the Qur'an, if recited with faith, has the value of prayer. [...]** Prayer is an essential component of man, precisely of his being man. **Man is truly such if he prays. Prayer is relationship with God.** Created by God in his image and likeness, man has the possibility of a one-on-one relationship with Him. [...]"³

4) Finally, to pray well, it is necessary **"to think of Paradise often,"** to be aware, not only of where we come from, but also of where we are going. In the same meeting in 1999, Chiara said to Muslim friends: "[...] *In heaven, in fact, where we hope to go, life will not be so much apostolate or something else, as praise, adoration, thanksgiving to God. Therefore,*

