

A pathway for the integral formation of children of the Focolare Movement

A) Children in the Focolare Movement - the gen 4 and gen 5

A treasure to be discovered...

The spirituality of communion helps us discover the child who characteristically is original, imaginative, clear-thinking and generous, as a gift and font of wisdom for adults.

What is particularly special about children is that they are close to God and particularly sensitive to the supernatural world; they carry within the culture of heaven.

... to renew society ...

Children are making the discovery of the world. If their soul welcomes the principles of the Movement which are all Holy Spirit – Chiara said in 1966: *«if they are like that (...) it starts to become a way of thinking for them. We currently have scores of people who will one day take a Gospel-based way of thinking into society. (...) They develop such a strong faith that it is almost unbreakable. This is also a characteristic of children ».*

... and grow together.

We give children our attention by listening to them and respecting the way they express themselves: through their creative activities, games and stories...

But valuing children requires a different kind of attention to that of other generations. A local community that knows how to welcome these little ones will try to create a space for sharing where everyone finds their place. It will be a family-like community made up of people of every generation that accompanies and supports the children's formation (parents, teachers, grandparents, young people, adolescents, little children, etc).

The gen4 - the "little buds"

"Let the little children come to me"(Mt 19,14).

These words of Jesus have always been very much alive in the Focolare Movement where children hold a privileged place. It is with these words that Chiara Lubich, founder of the Movement, invited every internal member of the Opera to accompany and welcome the little ones into this great family.

Chiara never made any distinctions between the young and old when she gave the spirituality in a complete and radical way because: *"We should not just see them as children. We should see them as children with a soul, and the soul has no age. It is always a soul". (C. Lubich 1966)*

The boys and girls aged 4 to 8 years who welcome and live the Chiara's spirituality are known as the gen4.

At the first Gen4 Congress in 1988, in response to a question, Chiara explained that the **gen4 are the “little buds”**, the tree’s future. The gen4 boys and girls are a living and essential part of the great family of the Opera. There would have been no gen4 if there had been no tree but the tree will not have a future without the “little buds”.

For the gen4 to realise they are the “little buds”, they need to feel part of a larger reality and “see one another grow”. The role of the “tree” is to make sure they look after the “little buds” because their presence shows that the tree is alive.

Children from different churches, church communities, those of other religions and those without religious convictions can also take part in gen4 activities.

The children bear witness to the beauty of a life which is made up of acts of love and bring with them the fruits of situations around them that have been transformed. We know of children from non-practising families who asked if they could be baptised after they started going to gen4 meetings.

There are also families who change their way of life and others who return to a life of faith following the example of their young children.

Verônica from Brazil who is 6 years old was accompanying her mother to the supermarket. It was very busy and the mother was very impatient. Verônica wanted to help her so when they got home she took courage. “Mummy, you just have to say ‘that’s enough’ and start again!” The mother was so struck by her daughter’s mature and loving attitude that she wanted to know what they did in their meetings. Today the whole family tries to follow Verônica’s example.

Gen5

Chiara’s love for the children was not limited to the gen4, children aged 4 to 8 years.

In 1995 as she was greeting a few mothers in Trent with new-born babies in their arms, she thought these children are baptised in the Church because their parents commit to bringing them up as good Christians.

«*So I said – Chiara recalls, responding to the question of a gen4 from Castelli Romani – but these are all children of people in the Ideal, in the Opera. Why can’t they too be part of the Opera?*

And so the gen5 were born! *The mum and dad are their assistants because they are both in the Opera and have to act in such a way that they bring up good Christians as well as good gen4. The gen5 are from 0 - three and a half. They become gen4 when you turn three and a half.»*

The gen5 are entrusted to the gen4. As Chiara said, in the same answer to a question: ***“These children are also entrusted to you. You must bring them up, play with them, teach them about the Ideal and teach them to love. You might say: “But they don’t understand anything”. Yet they do understand what they see, so if you behave well and love, they learn and say: “Ah, I need to love” and so they too love...»***

B) Pedagogy inspired by love

The Gen4 are at the best age for learning, including spiritual learning.

How do we take care of the “gift” that each child is and accompany them in their growth so that every aspect of being human is developed: the spiritual, affective, intellectual and creative...?

Today’s children are the same yet different to children in the past. The same because they are limited as creatures but they carry the infinite within them. Different because they are children of today, of their time.

The proposal for the formation of the gen4 is based on a theoretical framework which covers

different aspects of the person. It is a pedagogy inspired by love which, helps the person develop in a harmonious way, according to their different components by specifically developing every aspect of Love:

- *the Spiritual aspect:*

“They say that it is essential for religious life for divinity to enter in the first three years. I think it depends on this: being innocent and having the grace, the grace needed for divine and religious things, it is easier for them to accept these truths.”. (C. Lubich 1972)

Children understand Jesus, they understand God, they understand love... and when they understand, they are so taken by this life that they forget everything else. The children often do not want to leave the meeting. Of course, children do not have the same idea of time as us adults. They see the present more. But they often say: “I want to stay here for ever. I don’t want the meeting to ever end...” They often cry when it is time to go home after a meeting!

We therefore suggest:

- creating space “for the supernatural” where children can quench their natural thirst for beautiful things, helping them to enter into the divine for their interior life to grow;
- helping them to discover that they can have a direct relationship with Jesus, growing together in faith.

- *The personal and interpersonal aspect:*

The art of loving helps a child to grow as a person and develop the ability to relate to others, forgive, welcome others and accept difference.

As one gen4 says: «There is a girl in my class who never shares anything with others even when she can. One day she came to school and took out her book which was a bit torn in parts. She was sad and asked if anyone had any sellotape because she wanted to repair her book. All the other girls refused saying: “You’ll just have to make do, we’re not giving you any because you never give us anything.” But I said to my friends: “You know, God is love, He loves us, so I too have to love everyone. I cannot refuse her my sellotape.” Then, not only did I lend her my sellotape, I also helped her repair her book. I felt Jesus in my heart ».

We therefore suggest helping them to:

- acquire greater self-esteem and self-confidence;
- make human qualities such as patience, the art of listening, gratuity, respect for rules grow, with us being the first to set the example;
- develop their capacity to love and the culture of giving;
- learn to face situations of personal or other suffering, and not to stop when faced with difficulties;
- discover the joy of being together, playing and being creative in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

- *The social and global dimension - “the child-citizen”*

Gen4 formation provides for the development of collaborative-type skills, the ability to recognise and appreciate different identities through the optic of dialogue and mutual respect, living experiences of active citizenship, taking care of the environment and nature, developing

an awareness of being global citizens from a young age.

The purpose of this formation for positive social skills is to develop values and behaviour towards a healthy social growth, so as to become “child-citizens” who can play an active role in building the community.

We therefore suggest:

- helping them discover all that is positive in the world: a world that can be animated by generosity, solidarity, peace and the love that leads to universal fraternity;
- helping them discover they are part of a community, learning to see the needs of people and society on a local and global level;
- helping them to be sensitive to those in need, learning to share and live the culture of giving;
- helping them take care of their local environment, to be in harmony with creation;
- putting down solid foundations to form “new people”, builders of peace and fraternity from an early age so as to become apostles of dialogue and make their contribution to building a united world.

These three dimensions (spiritual, personal and interpersonal, social and global) that make up our being, are strongly linked and inseparable as we will see when we speak about content and ways of running a meeting.

C) A programme of formation

During his visit to the little town of Loppiano on 10 May 2018 Pope Francis spoke extensively about formation. He highlighted three points in particular:

- 1) It is particularly essential to develop a programme of formation which connects the individual paths which specifically concern children, young people, families and people of various vocations.
- 2) The basis and key to everything is the “pact of formation” which is the premise for each of these pathways and whose particular method is founded on proximity and dialogue.
- 3) We then need to be educated to practise together the three languages: of the head, the heart and the hands. So we must learn to think, feel and work well. (...) Education must touch head, heart and hands.

We feel that the pathway of formation being taken ahead in the Movement for the new generations, based on Chiara’s intuitions, takes into account all three dimensions:

- 1) We want to offer all of the spiritual patrimony that Chiara gave the children but gradually, according to each one’s age, to maintain that sense of wonder for each stage: “Jesus grew in age, wisdom and grace” (Lk. 2,52).
We also try to take care of and accompany them as they pass through the different stages: from children (gen4) to adolescents (gen3).
A programme of formation is continuously being developed with contents to suit every age and material being shared for different age groups which go into depth in a different way.
- 2) We want to try to be a real “neighbour” for every child we meet. A loving approach towards each one will lead to: closeness, openness to dialogue, patience and welcome.
This means for example using age-appropriate language and methods (as we will explain later on) but also taking into account their different situations, adapting the suggestions according to the geographical areas and/or to the church or religion they belong to.
- 3) Our approach to communicating content should never be solely theoretical but should

always be an approach based on life. We know the value of experiences that are born, clarify and support contents.

D) Who are the educators? Characteristics and commitments of the assistants and animators

The community

There is an African proverb which says: "A whole village is needed to bring up a child".

Education is a process that should involve the whole community.

Chiara Lubich, as far back as 1966, said: *"The whole Opera with Jesus in the midst knows how to really be Jesus in the midst for these children, in such a way that Jesus in the midst can replace the mother, father, educators, because he is also Teacher. (...) So when there are days dedicated to the children (...) the whole Opera should be involved"*.

Since **it is not individuals but the whole community that educates** (and therefore the co-responsibility of the whole community must grow for the process of formation and accompaniment of children, adolescents and young adults), we nevertheless want to stress that people who are dedicated in a particular way to the delicate task of being "guardian angels" are also needed.

The assistants and animators

- **Who they are:** the assistants and animators – lay or consecrated members – chosen from within the Focolare Movement are people who are suitably prepared to establish a dialogue with and amongst the children which helps them to grow in their knowledge of themselves and their relationship with others and with God.
- **Preparation and formation:** in the Movement we are trying to support the formation of all those who offer to provide this service in a particular way, through a project entitled: EduxEdu project – "Educate ourselves to educate others".
- **Assistants and parents:** respecting the specific role of the parents, we share the contents and the objectives of the activities with them. It is very constructive to plan meetings with the parents where the programme is shared.

The DVD "Joy spreads" is a tool to form the animators and show a wider public and the parents how the gen4 are followed.

The protection of minors

The privileged attention that those in the Focolare Movement have always tried to have towards the new generations has been enriched in recent years by guidance from the Teaching of the Church, directions and norms connected to promoting the well-being and protection of minors. Guidelines have consequently been written up within the Movement (which can be adapted by the national Centres in each country according to their respective cultural and juridical realities).

For whom are these guidelines intended?

- primarily for the animators and assistants who should get to know them and commit to observing them when preparing and carrying out activities and meetings with children;
- and for every member of the Movement who should be informed about and conform to these norms since "it is the community that educates".

E) Contents, proposals, actions and instruments

A gen4 is someone who wants to live like Jesus and Chiara. These are realities that refer to each other and illuminate each other where life, thought and action are tightly linked.

E1) The main contents of formation are:

*** The Story of Chiara and other experiences of life**

For a child to be a gen4 it is very important that they develop a “relationship” with Chiara by listening to episodes of her story, those of her first companions and other significant people in the Movement. In general we should try to find ways of conveying the different realities of the Opera, helping them discover that they are part of a big family with all its values of universality, openness, fraternity that are communicated through the story of the Opera.

Apart from getting to know Chiara and the popi/e of the Opera, it is very useful to share with them experiences and living testimonies of other children like them. They are the “role-models” and examples closer to their own reality which can be very useful instruments for conveying the values and beauty of Christian life. Apart from stories of gen4 who have already finished their Holy Journey, there are countless experiences of gen4 of every age and culture.

*** Stories from the Old and New Testament – The Word of Life**

Another important pillar for forming a gen4 is “trying to live like Jesus”. So it is important not only to help them to recognise God’s design of Love in the story of Salvation, by telling stories from the Old and New Testament, but also to help them discover with the whole community, that each phrase of the Gospel can be lived.

The resources available are:

- *Stories from the Old and New Testament*

Stories accompanied by a motto and experiences of the gen4. Through stories about the life of Jesus children can discover a relationship with Him which becomes real with experiences on the art of loving.

- *The Word of Life*

Reading, discussing and living a phrase from the Gospel and later sharing experiences on that phrase is a practice that involves everyone, both adults and children.

E2) Suggestions and actions that are rooted in the life of the Gospel and Chiara’s experience which Chiara herself gave for the gen4 age group

*** *Going into depth with themes on Christian life or other realities:***

Chiara Lubich’s answers to the gen4 boys and girls: in various meetings/congresses with gen4 boys and girls from all over the world, Chiara had a way of answering the various “theological”, personal and social questions the children asked. They are therefore a vast patrimony from which to draw to be able to go into depth on many subjects.

For example, drawing from Gospel stories and answers of Chiara, useful material has been prepared by the Gen4 Centre for going into depth with the gen4 on the points of the Spirituality of the Movement.

*** *The “cube of love”***

The “cube of love” which was entrusted to the gen4 at their congress in 1998 is also rooted in the Gospel and enlightened by Chiara’s experience in the Movement. It quickly became a useful tool for helping adults and children discover the art of loving where the gen4 experience going beyond themselves, forgiveness and fraternal relationships, through play. It is also an easy, accessible way of sharing the life of the gen4 with their friends, classmates...

*** *Living for those most in need– gen4 businesses***

Struck by the lives of the early Christians and the first members of the Movement who held everything in common and loved the poor, the gen4 generously promote the most varied activities:

- Making a “bundle” of their own toys and other objects to offer to the poor;
- Making a piggy bank and saving money to give to those most in need;
- Organizing a party, for example a birthday or First Communion party and inviting the guests to donate something for poor children;
- Starting “mini gen4 businesses” (making necklaces, bracelets, greeting cards, sweets....) to participate in the experience of the Economy of Communion and have “profits” that can help the poor even more.

This can help to make the experience of giving and sharing less abstract and more alive, identify real situations to which they can send help (bring toys to a household; send money to children in another country...).

*** *“Giving”***

What has been constant in the experience of Chiara’s life and that of the early times is attention for the other who is not only the poor person with nothing to eat but also anyone who is lacking something because they are alone, sad, without knowledge...

Many examples and ideas of what can be “given” were “donated” to the gen4 with a response prepared by Chiara which Dori brought to the Gen4 Congress in 2004: Chiara helps them to discover that “there is no one who doesn’t have something to give!”.

In this way the “culture of giving” becomes life for the gen4.

*** *Action “They have driven Jesus away”***

With the help of Chiara’s experience who realised whilst waiting in Zurich in Switzerland for Christmas that the decorated shop windows had everything ... except Jesus: “this wealthy world has ‘ensnared’ Christmas and everything around it but has driven out Jesus!”, the gen4 boys and girls rediscover that it is Jesus that should be celebrated at Christmas.

All over the world models in plaster or other materials are made and distributed with Chiara’s meditation. The money received is sent to children in need.

*** *Mini-congresses/gen4 parties – the gen5***

Children are naturally apostolic: if something makes them happy they immediately want to tell their friends. And Chiara has always entrusted other children to the gen4 so that they hold meetings for them to help them discover how to be happy. Every gen4 activity (giving, actions for peace, they have driven out Jesus ...) is an opportunity to invite other children.

Then in 1996 Chiara entrusted the gen5 to the gen4 (children under 3 and a half).

Christmas is a particularly good time to do something for the gen5 because the gen4 can do parties for them.

E3) Other actions and initiatives: creative faithfulness

Drawing from the life of the Gospel and Chiara's experience there may be other actions and suggestions that arise from the need for love besides finding ever new ways of giving and living everything mentioned in the previous point, ways that are adapted to the needs of children and a society which is evolving.

Here are a few examples:

* *The "dice of peace"*

By living "the cube of love" we are already beginning to build the true foundations for peace. The "dice of peace" can also be used to help the gen4 live more consciously and become active "peace-builders". The dice can be another beautiful instrument of the "apostolate" among friends, in schools and elsewhere ... (<http://livingpeaceinternational.org/it/>)

* *Thousands of children for peace*

By spreading the idea of "the cube of love" and/or "the dice of peace", or using other initiatives, we wanted to respond to Pope Francis' appeal during the Angelus of 4 February 2018: "*What can I do for peace?*".

The action called "thousands of children for peace" is an example of how to start from a topical issue which is rooted in the Gospel and in the words of Chiara and respond to what the Pope says, as the gen4 have done many other times in their story.

E4) Resources for a person's integral formation

As we have already said, the formation we try to give in the Movement is an integral formation that, as Pope Francis reminded us, involves the mind, heart and hands.

We have already looked at a number of tools that can help us follow children in their path towards maturity and in acquiring a supernatural vision to see Jesus in the other and build the foundations for new people to be formed who are capable of dialogue and forgiveness.

Nevertheless every period of history brings with it many riches but also many new challenges. Today's times, for example, are characterized by a proliferation of stimuli that reach us at an alarming rate. These stimuli produce emotions and these emotions lead to behaviour that is often impulsive rather than something that arises from a supernatural gaze. So, in order to ensure that the person develops a more harmonious relationship with themselves and with others, we have seen in recent years how useful it has been to supplement training in the art of loving with a path that helps children recognise and manage their basic emotions according their age.

We have therefore sought to develop appropriate materials: stories, games and various activities. A resource has been developed from this that seeks to convey this path and simultaneously provide support for adults who are in contact with children with reflections on the changing characteristics of children and their different emotions.

This resource is a mini newspaper **Big (Bambini in gamba - smart children)**, edited by **Città Nuova** - an interactive monthly magazine with games, cartoons, fictional and non-fictional stories as well as interesting facts. It is intended for children up to 10 years old and helps them discover all the positive that there is in the world. It promotes a pedagogy "of the positive" by spreading values like hospitality, peace, solidarity and universal fraternity. Each edition presents a particular theme in an entertaining way and contains an insert which the educators can remove and keep.

A further project being prepared is an educational pathway on affectivity and global harmonic maturation of children in the evolutive age (age 4-8 years): **Up2Me for children**

F) Methodology- communication tools

We have discussed how one of the points of the formation programme is “becoming neighbours”, paying attention to the other. We have said how education should use the 3 languages of the mind, heart and hands. How can we translate all of this into the way we relate to children?

- Give everything with a vision for the supernatural

In 1966 Chiara said: *“So we should give everything to the children and young people in our Movement! To summarize, just as everything is shared in a family, apart from exceptional cases (...), but for the rest everything is communicated, we should present the Movement to the children exactly as it is. **How? I don’t mean in a brief or lengthy way; I mean that we should give them everything but in the way that they understand.** Not so much in a way that you make yourselves one with them so that they understand but in **such a way that it touches their soul**, where I would say the imagination, the will and many other things are most excellently developed. (...) So we should give everything in the Movement. (...)*

*For example someone talks about the Opera today and explains that there are the focolarini, the volunteers, the adherents, the third branch, that there are the different... Is that what they should say? Yes, you should but **it is about conveying to the young people that element of heroism that exists in the vocation of the focolarino, and the element of adventure and imagination (for the little ones). Do you know how to convey that? Then do! If you don’t now how to convey this then don’t because it will only escape them.”***

- Making ourselves one

Chiara in 1966 again:

*“(...) so we need to make ourselves one with them in a divine way. **To make ourselves one in a divine way means participating in their lives.***

*(...) The children: their life should be mostly playing. God wanted it like that. It’s not about making ourselves one with them and then starting to play with them (but) about understanding their game. Games are to children what work is to adults. So if we don’t set up our lessons as games, mostly as games, then we have understood nothing about children. **It is not that we play with the children so as to make friends with them and then act the moral guide by saying: now I am going to tell you something about the catechism or spirituality. We must play with them because we love them, to love them we must play with them. We love children by playing with them”.***

In 1990: *“The keyword for the gen4 is: **play, play, play.** Make up lots of games then add one single idea to the play. (...)*

They’re at the age of dolls and games. It’s their work, the way they make sense of life. This is how God wanted it to be. They are small and this is how they live”.

Playing with them means remembering to use methods that unite the 3 languages and speak to the head, heart and hands:

- Shall we talk about the Economy of Communion? Let’s play a game to understand how the businesses work. We divide the money we make into 3... and then try to start a real business: making necklaces, baking biscuits... and then selling them to send the money to the poor;

- Shall we talk about Chiara's trips, her relationship with the Buddhists, the birth of Fontem...?: we can make a newspaper, a news broadcast to tell others these beautiful stories;
- Shall we talk about a parable from the Gospel? We could try to make a play about it with costumes and then perform it for the gen5;
- We could see if there is a song about the reality we want to speak about: let's learn it together, mime it, act it out

We would like to emphasize the importance of **songs and songs with actions**. They are a really important form of education which stays with them for the rest of their lives. Mainly because when a child expresses himself with his body, what he sings also becomes a prayer. Very often young people or adults who were gen4 particularly remember the games and songs! It is natural because when they sing and play they are active. They feel like protagonists. It's an experience which means something for them.

- In general let us try to do something concrete for every topic we cover.

Let us appreciate the value of creativity: children possess a great richness within them. They are full of imagination, they are creative... How can we encourage this? It is important to believe in their capabilities, give him space and time to express themselves and know how to appreciate everything they suggest, thus communicating their inventiveness. For example, when preparing a little play it is good to divide up the roles in a "unexpected" way: let one of them be the director, another - responsible for costumes, and so on.

The gen4 website has suggestions for creative activities: pictures to colour in or cut out, things to make (from postcards, stones, sheets of paper, dough, for presents, etc.) together with ideas for plays.

G) Activities and meetings

We would like every activity and every meeting to be a positive experience for each child. One that gives joy, encourages spiritual growth and a real relationship of friendship with their companions.

The starting point should be to be well prepared so that the children see in us real witnesses and feel the presence of Jesus in the Midst, working in teams both in the preparation phase and in the meeting itself. Preparing the materials and the environment are also important for welcoming the children appropriately, always aiming at:

- Building situations where all the children can have experiences of growth rather than failure, helping them to win and lose in a constructive way and overcome every difficulty together;
- Suggesting clear, realistic and age-appropriate tasks for the children;
- Supporting them, but never replacing them completely;
- Praising the effort they put into activities more than the result.

Elements to bear in mind when preparing a meeting

1. **The children:** who is coming? How many will there be? Do I already know them or are they new children?
2. **The contents:** what do I want to give them in this meeting? How do I want to start?
 - I will of course need to take into account what the children are living at that moment (the time of year, an important event, what they might have seen on the TV ...), or maybe something we did together the previous time;

- if they are new children, what would I like to help them discover? The art of loving? How the Gen4 live? The story of Chiara?

- if it is the group that I usually meet with, what did we do the previous time? What do I want to give them today?

Important: it is important to bear in mind that a certain amount of time will need to be dedicated to conveying the “content” of the meeting. It would be good to have songs, games...materials available that are connected to the subject of the meeting. They are useful for welcoming the children at the start or for finishing off the meeting.

3. **The method:** long discussions are not needed but it is important to be well prepared getting to the “heart” of each reality being offered to know how to give the supernatural that directly touches the soul.

Let us not forget the wonder of childhood and give “pearls” only when there are the right conditions for them to be welcomed.

Let us go gradually, helping the children to take the necessary steps to be able to welcome a particular reality.

To create the “right atmosphere” for a reality to be welcomed at a meeting and not be “lost”, it helps to prepare a series of activities that draw their attention and help them to concentrate.

4. **Tools for conveying the contents of a meeting:** once the content or contents to be given at that meeting have been identified, there are a number of ways they can be conveyed:

- you could start with an appropriate song, an experience, a game, a puzzle;
- you can look for answers of Chiara on that theme;
- you could invite a “special guest”, an “expert” to the meeting or go to visit them; someone who will tell them or teach them something ...;
- you can then do little plays, games, activities, that can help to internalise those contents.

5. **The material needed:** for the meeting to be successful it is good to have everything ready beforehand that might be useful for the programme aswell as the activities linked to the programme (check that any IT equipment is working; have colours, sheets, materials for the games ready...).

Some advice for a meeting to run well

1. **Welcome:** try to give your full personal attention to each child that arrives, in such a way that they feel welcomed, listened to, that they feel that you are happy to see them.
2. **Games and creative activities:** these should never be left out because they are important for the relationship between the children and to help them express themselves.
3. **Snacktime:** having a snack break helps the children to concentrate. It can also be a beautiful moment for sharing. Suggestion: celebrate birthdays ...
4. **The conclusion:** it is also important to think of something to conclude the meetings. If you manage it is useful to ask how it went to understand what they experienced, how they lived the meeting, if there were any difficulties in the relationship ...
5. **A souvenir:** finally, it is beautiful to have something that the children can take home with them to help them remember what they lived during the meeting.

Other useful indications

- It is important to be ready to change the programme according to the demands of the children;
- For the safety it is indispensable to keep in mind the aspect of first aid: use common sense, a suitable first aid kit and know where the nearest medical centre is;
- If possible, choose venues that are suitable for meetings (with safe spaces to play), and go to see them before the meeting if the venue hasn't previously been used for a meeting, to understand how to overcome any of its shortcomings (lack of outdoor space, toilets that are too far away...);
- After the meeting or activities it is good to have a moment of evaluation with the team to discuss how it went, what could be improved, involving the local community more and more.

H) Themes of Chiara Lubich cited in the text:

- Chiara to the focolarine (Loppiano, 19 August 1966)
- Chiara to the city (Loppiano, 29 March 1972)
- Chiara to those responsible for the zone of Milan and Florence (Rocca di Papa, 5 October 1990)
- Answers to the internal members at Castelli Romani (21 January 1995)