

7.30pm Welcome, overview, check in with hopes and fears of group present

7.40pm Short overview input followed by buzz and open forum

a. Listening as a starting point in sharing the good news – Pope Francis in Joy of the Gospel

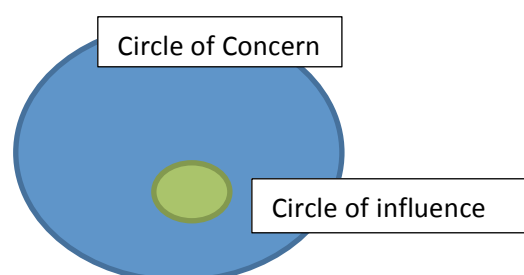
- Draw close to people and listen to what is important for them
- Seek to share our good news in ways that connect with them, that they experience as beautiful
- Engage with the popular religious culture

b. The listening survey

- Paulo Freire, an adult educator working on literacy programs in Brazil, struggled with the problem of apathy. People weren't coming to his literacy courses. Instead of asking - *What is wrong with the people that they are not interested in my courses?* Freire asked - *What is wrong with the courses that they are not interesting for the people?*
- Freire saw a direct connection between *emotion* and *motivation*, people will act on issues about which they have strong feelings now. He reasoned that if he could discover the issues that his target group had strong feelings on, and if he could connect his courses to those issues, then the courses would be more relevant to the real life concerns of the people and they would be more likely to come.
- In order to discover what those concerns were Freire developed the **Listening Survey**. Basically this involved a small group from his target group meeting with him on a weekly basis for a number of weeks. The key question for discussion was simply this - *What did you hear people talk about during the week with strong feelings - what were the things they spoke about with delight, sadness, anger, fear, anticipation etc.?* Freire believed that insights about the strongest feelings in a community could best be picked up *informally* - in other words not by going around with a formal questionnaire, but by participating in the normal informal conversations of people and listening for the strong feelings. He believed that the people best in a position to do that would be members of the community itself.
- So each week he met with a small group from the community, hearing from them what they in turn had heard in their community. Using this simple process Freire was able to identify a number of key *generative themes*, issues that were most strongly felt in the community. He was then able to develop programs based on those themes, with the result that the number of people participating in his programs greatly increased - his programs were now seen and experienced as relevant by the people.

c. The value of the survey

The survey allows us to pay attention to the lives of people with the question – What is the good news we have that we can share with these people and how best can we share it? While the survey throws up a wide variety of issues we are not seeking to respond to all those issues. While all form part of our circle of concern we are looking for those within our circle of influence.



8.10pm The survey in practice – short input followed by buzz and open forum

- The listening survey has been done by groups of people all over the country.
- In the normal conversations they are involved in with other people of their own community they listen out for the things people are speaking about with strong feelings - the things that people are angry, sad, happy about, afraid of, looking forward to, hoping for and so on.
- Each week for four weeks the listening survey group meet to report back on the things, the issues that they have heard other people speak about with strong feeling.
- They are not reporting back on people, only issues - so they never say “I heard so-and-so say this” only “I heard this issue been talked about and the people were feeling very...about it”
- During the week when they are taking part in the survey they do not do anything different from what they normally do, they do not go anywhere different or meet anyone different. They simply continue with their normal activities - the only difference is that they are listening with a careful ear for the issues that arise in everyday conversations, particularly issues that are spoken about with strong feelings.

Format of LS meeting

1. Welcome and opening prayer (5 min)

2. Individual sharing (25 min)

What did we hear people talk about during the week with strong feelings? What were the feelings? Why do we think they were feeling that way?

3. Group summary of patterns (20 min)

Which of these issues seem to us to be the ones most strongly and most widely felt among the people we were listening to?

4. Gospel response (40 min)

How do we see these issues in the light of faith? Where can we see the movement of the Spirit ? How can we respond in the diocese?

8.30pm Practicing the listening

a. Video

We show a ten minute segment from a DVD recording (Downtown Abbey) . The group present is invited to practice a listening survey - i.e. to pay attention to the strong feelings expressed and the causes of those.

b. Group discussion

What were the issues that you heard people speak about with strong feeling?

c. Review of practice

What made it hard to listen? What helped? What questions or issues do we have now about the listening survey?

9.10pm Review of night

Buzz and open forum on question – How did we find the night? Where do we go from here?

9.30pm Close

