

# We will be happy if... we have the courage to go against the current

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5,10)



## Objective

- To learn to recognise those **situations** of injustice which oppress individuals and entire social groups.
- Become a spokesperson for the weakest and take on a commitment in society to put an end to injustices.



## How did we get on?

Welcome, space for dialogue and to share all that each one has lived, the experiences made and the difficulties encountered. We can also **recall the objectives** we set ourselves at the last meeting. "How did we get on?"



## Introductory Activity

### Video Clip AND Reflection: Against injustices

#### VIDEO: "Silent"

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0\\_pC1EIS3eA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_pC1EIS3eA)

**LENGTH:** the video is 3'17" and about 30 min reflection time

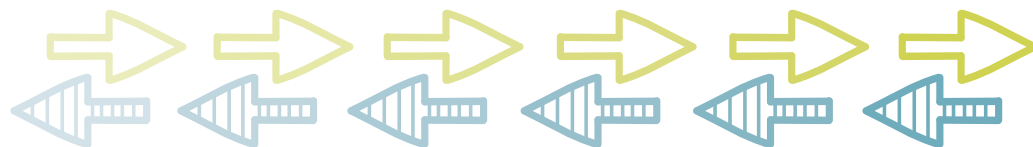
**MATERIALS:** Computer and internet access to watch the videoclip, paper and pen for each group

**FLOW:** Before watching the video, the animator could divide the youth into smaller groups and the members of each group should reflect among themselves (10 mins) on what it means for them 'to go against the current'.

After this first step, the video can be watched "**No hungry short film**", which shows a young boy whose action contrasts with that of his friends when he helps someone who is hungry, and then how together with his friends they carry out actions to feed the hungry.

At the end of the video, the groups can reflect about the following questions:

- Have you ever seen a similar situation at school or among your friends?
- Have you ever had to act differently to your friends for something which you thought was right?
- What injustices do you see around you? What can be done to oppose them?





## This is how we live

I was invited to Matteo's birthday party and together with my other friends we decided to give him a videogame. We all agreed and then at a certain point I realised that the video game in question was for adults.

What should I do? I was no longer sure it was the right present and therefore I spoke about it with the

person who had suggested it.

**Luca, the oldest member of the group without making an issue of it, confirmed the choice of videogame and it seemed as if everyone agreed with him.**

That evening I spoke about it at home and my father helped me to recognise 4 reasons why the videogame should not be bought: 1. My own uncertainty 2. The law 3. The damage that could be done, unconsciously 4. The fact that probably Matteo's parents would not be happy with the present. Immediately I phoned my other friends and I discovered

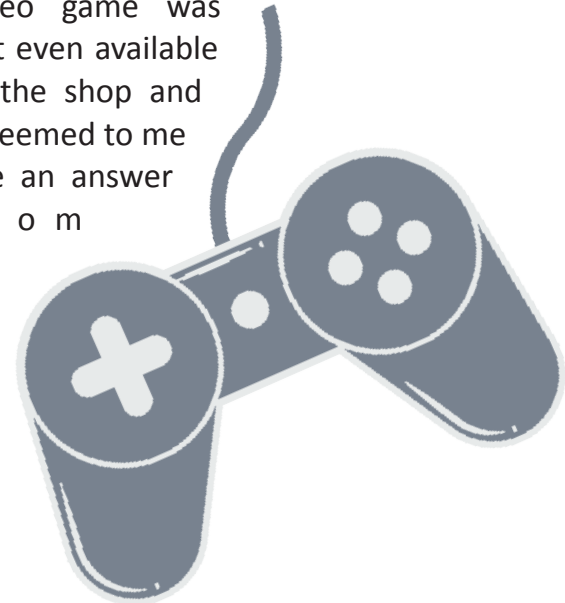


that most of them shared my opinion. The next day I dealt with the issue again. This time even those who were opposed or indifferent, including Luca, all agreed to buy another game.

When we went to buy the present, I realised that the banned video game was not even available in the shop and it seemed to me like an answer from

Jesus who was trying to protect me in some way, even if I had not done all my part. When Matteo opened the present on the night of his birthday his eyes opened wide with joy: **"it's just the game I wanted. Thank you!". I had a wonderful evening!**

*V. Italy*



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Among a group of friends that I sometimes hang out with there is a habit of stealing from big shops. Not everyone agrees with this action and some do it only to be accepted by the group. The first time they asked me to steal I said no, even though I knew that afterwards they would make fun of me. I explained why, saying that since I am a Christian and I live the words of the Gospel I don't steal. They

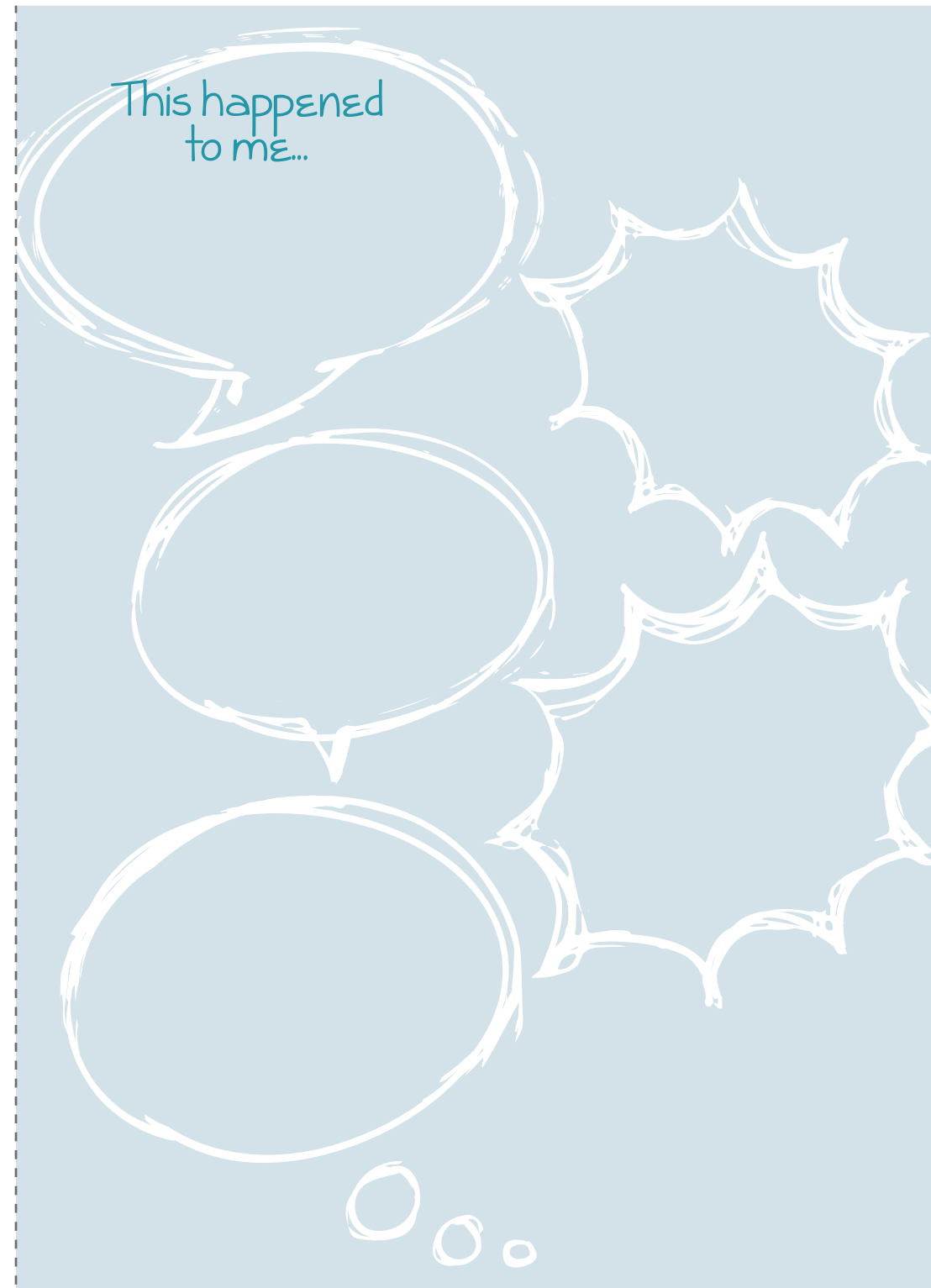
listened to me. Despite what I said, many times they asked me the same thing. I always refused, thanks to the support from the other gen with whom I share.

Lately I realised that the boys in the group who make fun of me, when they have a serious problem they come to speak to me.

*L. Italy*



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## Going into depth

### OUR PATHWAY AGAINST THE CURRENT

*"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven".*



Jesus himself warns us that the path he proposes goes against the flow, even making us challenge society by the way we live and, as a result, becoming a nuisance. He reminds us how many people have been, and still are, persecuted simply because they struggle for justice, because they take seriously their commitment to God and to others. Unless

we wish to sink into an obscure mediocrity, let us not long for an easy life, for "whoever would save his life will lose it" (Mt 16:25).

In living the Gospel, we cannot expect that everything will be easy, for the thirst for power and worldly interests often stands in our way. Saint John Paul II noted that "a society is alienated if its forms of social organization,



production and consumption make it more difficult to offer this gift of self and to establish this solidarity between people". In such a society, politics, mass communications and economic, cultural and even religious institutions become so entangled as to become an obstacle to authentic human and social development. As a result, the Beatitudes are not easy to live out; any attempt to do so will be viewed negatively, regarded with suspicion, and met with ridicule.

Whatever weariness and pain we may

experience in living the commandment of love and following the way of justice, the cross remains the source of our growth and sanctification. We must never forget that when the New Testament tells us that we will have to endure suffering for the Gospel's sake, it speaks precisely of persecution (cf Acts 5:41; Fil 1:29; Col 1:24; 2 Tm 1:12; 1 Pt 2:20; 4:14-16; Ap 2:10).

Here we are speaking about inevitable persecution, not the kind of persecution we might bring upon ourselves by our mistreatment of others. The saints



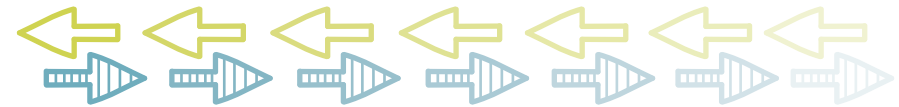
are not odd and aloof, unbearable because of their vanity, negativity and bitterness. The Apostles of Christ were not like that. The Book of Acts states repeatedly that they enjoyed favour “with all the people” (2:47; cf. 4:21.33; 5:13), even as some authorities harassed and persecuted them (cf 4:1-3; 5:17-18).

Persecutions are not a reality of the past, for today too we experience them, whether by the shedding of blood, as is the case with so many contemporary martyrs, or by more subtle means, by slander and lies.

Jesus calls us blessed when people “utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account” (Mt 5:11). At other times, persecution can take the form of gibes that try to caricature our faith and make us seem ridiculous.

Accepting daily the path of the Gospel, even though it may cause us problems: that is holiness. 💎

**Pope Francis,**  
*Apostolic Exhortation  
Gaudete et Exsultate,  
Paragraphs 90-94*



## Testimonies of going against the current

**Paraguay: Yvy Marane’y y “la tierra sin mal”**

*Link up April 22, 2017*

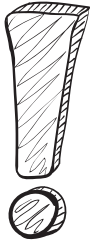
<http://collegamentoch.focolare.org/2017/04/22/paraguay-yvy-marane-y-la-tierra-sin-mal/>

**Eunice: “A criminologist who lives for justice in Kenya.”**

*Link up February 10, 2017*

<http://collegamentoch.focolare.org/2017/02/10/eunice-una-criminologa-che-vive-per-la-justizia-kenya/>

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## Let us try!

We can deepen this beatitude by taking more interest in the **social situations** in our cities and in the world.

Let us find a practical way to begin following one of the **pathways for a united world**.

For example, we fight against the situation of injustice we see around us, **committing ourselves personally** and getting involved in the project **#zerohunger**.



## How far have we got?

*To reach a goal we have to train daily and keep a note of the positive changes and the difficulties encountered.*

*We will help one another until we meet again and then we will give some time to share our experiences.*

Have we singled out an injustice in our area or in the world?

What have we managed to do practically speaking so as to color the grey areas of our city or in other nations?

## For the Group Leader



### Evaluation after the meeting

- **What was the atmosphere like?** Did we experience the joy of meeting together again, did we truly listen to one another? Can we say we experienced the presence of Jesus among us?
- **Did the proposed activities** give rise to an interest in these revolutionary words of Jesus? Were there any difficulties? What should we bear in mind so as to improve the next time?
- Did the youth bring to the fore any particular sensitive issue that still **need to be dealt with**?
- How can we assistants **accompany** and support the youth in their proposals until the next meeting?

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