



## **6º Encuentro Scriptural Reasoning Online “Leadership” | 02.02.2021, 19:30hrs**

In the context of the Youth Creative CommUnity campaign, which is part of the European project CommUnity, ARCO FORUM will organize a series of 24 interfaith Scriptural Reasoning activities (including the sacred writings from up to three Abrahamic religions) where young people talk about different topics based on texts parts of their sacred writings. Our activities are based on the methodology developed by the Cambridge Interfaith Program (Cambridge University).

### **About the CommUnity project**

The CommUnity project, co-funded by the European Commission, involves 11 public and private institutions from 7 EU countries. The CommUnity project aims to address drivers of radicalisation, such as marginalisation, inequality, discrimination and denial of rights. It seeks to create new opportunities to promote peace and shared values through artistic and cultural expression. By giving a voice to young people who feel marginalised or unfairly treated, we can build powerful communities with a greater sense of belonging, well-being and self-esteem.

### **About the Youth Creative CommUnity Campaign**

The Youth Creative CommUnity is a Campaign within the CommUnity project which seeks to engage young people through artistic and creative lenses. To this end, through different Youth Creative Clubs, small artistic groups will be established, and artistic and cultural activities will be developed. The Youth Creative Clubs will be guided by artists and youth workers. Young people, who seek to empower their identity, will be encouraged to find various creative ways to express themselves. Through cultural and artistic expressions, such as music, painting, visual arts workshops, young people can develop a stronger sense of belonging. In addition, young people will be challenged to create something related to the theme "Peacefully Together", which they will present at the "Youth Creative Festival" on the first weekend of June in Brussels, Belgium. In the case of ARCO FORUM in total 24 Scriptural Reasoning sessions will be conducted and then presented at the Youth Creative Festival.

### **About Scriptural Reasoning (SR)**

In Scriptural Reasoning (SR), participants meet to read passages from their respective sacred texts. They discuss the content and the ways in which those texts shape their



understanding of contemporary issues. The goal is not agreement but rather growth in understanding one another's traditions. The practice started off between Jews, Christians, and Muslims, but many other combinations of faiths have been tried.

Reading, listening to and reflecting on scripture is something many do naturally within their own worshipping communities. Participants in SR are not asked to leave that behind; rather, people of different faiths come together to read and reflect on their scriptures side-by-side.

The outcome of these activities can be summarized on three main points:

1. Learning and understanding- Participants learn more about other faith communities.
2. Exploring differences - Not only to appreciate the many things which we share and have in common, but it also to appreciate differences and teach.
3. Friendships- As traditional stereotypes of the 'other' are broken down, barriers are dismantled and at best, participants develop lasting friendships.

### **About this 6th Scriptural Reasoning Session**

This sixth session took place on the 2nd of February 2021 at 19.30 hrs with the topic "Leadership". This topic was discussed based on the sacred writings from three Abrahamic religions (the New Testament, the Hebrew Bible and the Quran).

The event focused on the main topic of introducing different religions, their bases, beliefs, stories by peaceful dialogue among the participants with the aim to get to know each other's religion better, eliminating prejudices and learning how to have peace- and respectful discussions.

The speciality about this event in comparison to the events that have been done before was that it was conducted within the frame of the World Interfaith Harmony Week. As well it was the first time that a Scriptural Reasoning event was conducted via StreamYard, an online platform to host professional streams where 10 Participants are allowed to be in one "show". Apart from these 10 Participants, as the Session was transmitted live via YouTube there were another 25 viewers.

At the beginning of the event the participants were welcomed and a short explanation about the CommUnity project, the Campaign itself, the Concept of Scriptural Reasoning and the World Interfaith Harmony Week was given. After that the participants presented themselves to get to know each other better and to create a safe space where everyone could speak freely. Before the texts of the sacred writings were read out loud the essential guidelines for a respectful and good discussion were presented. Then the participants were introduced to the text from the Hebrew Bible by



reading it out loud from a participant from another religious tradition than the text was. Afterwards a discussion about this sacred text started among the participants. After that the same was done with the text from the New Testament and the Quran and a discussion about it and the link of the three texts to the topic “Leadership” followed.

Questions discussed with the participants and some of their comments during the session:

In this session there was an equal number of participants of each of the three Abrahamic religions which made the discussion much more interesting and balanced.

1. Impressions on the text of the Hebrew Bible:

- Participants said that a leader is characterized by acting according to God’s orders. He/She is a balance between Him and the life and people on Earth, meaning that he/she is a person that leads people ahead and into a bigger/higher purpose. He/she leads them into something that people don't know already and thus he/she has to be a trusted source.
- As sheeps need a shepherd, the community/people need a leader. A leader has to position him/herself in front of the community but not put itself in a “higher” and more important position in an ignorant way but rather working for the group. He/she is the one who “pulls the car”.

2. Impressions on the text of the New Testament:

- Participants said that the verse “The one who wants to be first is going to be the last of all” is really profound because this person won’t be only the last of his/her group but the last of all. It reminded the participants of how humble Jesus was.
- A leader shouldn’t be above the ones he is leading; to be a good leader you should not be the first but rather the last.
- The leader has to be the person who also does the bad work and talks about things people usually don't want to talk about.
- A leader shouldn’t watch from above and show him/herself in a good way but rather should be part of the base and involved in the hard work as well.
- The fact that Jesus is talking to a child and hugging him in front of the men is a big gesture especially for that time. The men were discussing who is the most important and putting a child in the middle, who at that time didn't have any importance and any



voice and to whom people never listened to, was quite scandalous. The leader showed that the youngest and the weakest of the group should be in the center and will be an adult some day and could be the next leader.

### 3. Impressions on the text of the Quran:

- Participants said that in the Quran the leader of the community is described as a servant.
- All the power is in the hands of God, if He leaves us there is no power left because He is the leader and He has the power.
- A good leader listens to the opinion of the community even if he does not agree and even if he knows more about it. But also, shouldn't be upset if the community decides for something else and later recognizes the mistake that was done.

### **About obstacles due to the Covid-19 pandemic**

The COVID- 19 pandemic is still affecting Spain on a high level and gathering many people is difficult. Therefore, Arco Forum has decided to organise their events virtually using the platform Stream Yard and different social media channels such as Twitter and Youtube. To make these online sessions more interesting and dynamic, Arco Forum has chosen to use new methods to integrate their participants such as the platform MentiMeter. Through this platform the participants can share their impressions of the event with us.

To make these online sessions more interesting and dynamic ARCO FORUM tries to reinvent itself constantly using new methods to integrate all participants, for instance, we started using the platform "Mentimeter" where Word-Cloud with the participants' impressions on the session can be shared.

### **About ARCO FORUM's Scriptural Reasoning activities in the media**

ARCO FORUM is announcing each of its activities on the social media platforms of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and some also on LinkedIn, the same is done with the outcome of each activity so that followers and the audience is always updated on the activities occurring. These posts are always linked with the corresponding Hashtags of the CommUnity project (#CommunityProyectEurope and #YouthCreativeCommunityEurope) and the World Interfaith Harmony Week (#WIHW and #WIHW2021) as well as the corresponding pages tagged.



WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK



The Official UN Observance in the 1<sup>st</sup> Week of February

Apart from that, the Scriptural Reasoning sessions organized by ARCO FORUM have been covered by the Spanish media. The weekly newspaper "ALFA Y OMEGA" conducted an interview with Yusuf Isikoglu, youth worker and active member at ARCO FORUM and Alba Pamies, a repeated participant at the sessions in Barcelona and also online. As this article was published in the weekly "ALFA Y OMEGA" newspaper which is distributed in printed form with the "ABC Newspaper" this article reached 83 000 people in printed form and another 15-18 thousand people (for 3 days it was in the cover page of the weekly magazine which has 5-6 thousand unique visitors each day) via digital ways. The whole article can be read here: <https://alfayomega.es/que-dice-el-coran-sobre-la-paz-y-la-biblia/?fbclid=IwAR2buGhZl2edHe7CtJoyINK7b9tknlqIGliBBPT6zJucUyFKpiB7HFTC5ws>