



9º Encuentro Scriptural Reasoning “Leadership” | 21.02.2021, 18:15 hrs

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.

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 teaches.
3. Friendships- As traditional stereotypes of the 'other' are broken down, barriers are dismantled and at best, participants develop lasting friendships.

About the 9th Session

This ninth session took place on the 21st of February 2021 at 18.15 hrs with the topic "Leadership". This topic was discussed based on the sacred writings from two Abrahamic religions (the New Testament and the Quran) with in total 23 Participants from Madrid and other Spanish cities.

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. Additionally ARCO FORUM collaborated with the Basílica de la Milagrosa (Madrid) in this activity.

At the beginning of the event the participants were invited to drink some turkish tea, coffee and eat some cake and cookies. This gave us, the staff from ARCO FORUM but also the participants, the possibility to get to know each other in an informal way. After 15 minutes all the participants got to their seats, 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 the whole group 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 New Testament 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 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:

1. Impressions on the text of the New Testament:

- Most participants agreed that a leader is made, rather than born. It was accepted during the session that it depends on one’s own context and abilities to become a leader.
- One participant who is also a teacher, explained his own personal experience with children, comparing it to the child example made in the text, stating that even as a kid, it is quite visible a kid’s value as a leader and his ability to grab people, or followers, both to a good or bad path.
- The discussion moved to the figure of the child used in the text and its significance, with some participants saying that it means that the leader should work in modesty, and it is seen as a symbol of purity and innocence.
- It was said that the leadership style of Jesus Christ is modesty, to be an example for his followers, to give oneself to the others, specially to the weak ones, to the point of giving even his own life for the deliverance of the rest.

2. Impressions on the text of the Quran:

- Participants explained that a good leader is wise and knows it all in advance. They explain that the prophet already knows what will happen. However, he, as a good leader, asks and listens to what the others think and suggest.
- Participants highlighted the importance of listening as a fundamental value for leadership, and to avoid considering one’s own point of view above the others. The prophet was aware of the consequences of the action, but still chose to listen and take the decision based on a democratic agreement and considered everyone’s perspective.



- Participants agreed that the Quran proposed some more values of a good leader, which were added to the idea of leadership discussed in the session, which can be summarized as the one who listens to every opinion with equality and justice, without imposing his decision.

3. Impressions on the whole topic:

- During the discussion, there were some disagreements on the idea of “leader” and “boss”. Some participants said that a leader and a boss are different concepts with different objectives, whereas some other ones stated that it is (or at least, it should be) the same figure. It was argued that a boss is the one in charge, the one with the power; while the leader does not gather that much power for himself, but instead consolidates that power and strength for the people.

- However, there were also some similarities found between both texts on what values a good leader should show. In the text from the New Testament, participants pointed out the figure of the child as the value of humility of a leader, as already mentioned before. At the same time, some participants explained that in the Quran there was also proof that a good leader should have the values of modesty and, following the same path as in Christian tradition, “whoever wants to lead, should be at the bottom of the hierarchy”.

- To finish the session, the moderator proposed that each participant explain in their own words what they understand as leadership. The general words gathered were modesty, wisdom, listening and consensus.

About obstacles due to the Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid19 pandemic had and still has a big effect on Spain. Therefore, it is difficult and rare to carry out offline activities with a large number of people. Because of this, ARCO FORUM got in contact with the parish “Basilica La Milagrosa” in the centre of Madrid where activities with a high hygiene measure status can still be conducted. (In Spain holy places can carry out events with a reduced number of participants when they follow high hygiene standards). That's why in this 9th session it was compulsory to wear a face mask at all times. The safety distance of (1.5 metres) has to be ensured during the whole activity and the participants had to wash their hands with soap and water or use hydroalcoholic gel when entering the parish.



WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK



The Official UN Observance in the 1st Week of February

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.

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. The whole article can be read here: <https://alfayomega.es/que-dice-el-coran-sobre-la-paz-y-la-biblia/?fbclid=IwAR2buGhZI2edHe7CtJoylNK7b9tknlqIGliBBPT6zJucUyFKpiB7HFtC5ws>