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| **Word of Life– February 2016** | | |  | **01** |
| **PRACTICE SHEET FOR ASSISTANTS/ ANIMATORS** | | | | |
| “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you” (Is 66:13) | | | | |
| ***OBJECTIVE:*** | **To become aware of how many suffer and to act accordingly** | | | |
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| ***HEARING THE WORD*** | | | ***GOING DEEPER*** | SUGGESTIONS FOR ***LIVING THAT TOGETHER***  *(select according to the Group)* |
| Have you ever seen a child who is crying run to their mother’s arms? **No matter what happened, even if it was just a little thing, the mother dries their tears and gives them a big hug. Soon after, the child starts to smile again.** In fact,all the child needed was to feel that their mother was close, giving them all her love.  **That’s what God does with us! He compares his love to a mother’s love.** | | |  |  |
| With these words, God speaks to his people returning from exile in Babylon. After seeing their homes and the Temple demolished, after being deported to a foreign land where they had tasted disappointment and despair, the people return to their homeland and have to start from the ruins and the destruction left behind by their enemies.  The tragedy experienced by Israel is the same as that which has been repeated for many nations during war, or people who are victims of terrorist acts or of inhuman exploitation. Houses and roads are torn up, symbols of their identity razed; property pillaged and places of worship destroyed. So many people have been abducted, millions forced to flee and thousands left dead in the desert or on the seas. It seems like the end of the world. | | | Stories of people who lived or are living now in a country where there is war.  Watch this clip:  <http://collegamentoch.focolare.org/2015/09/27/speranza-a-damasco/>  What can we do to “console” those who are going through painful moments of conflict? | Projects for young people who are refugees or who live in war-torn countries. |
| This Word of Life is an invitation to believe in the loving action of God even where you do not feel his presence. It is a message of hope. He is close to those who suffer persecution, injustice and exile. He is with us, with our family, with our people. He knows our personal pain and that of all humanity. He became one of us, even to the point of death on the cross. That is why we are understood and consoled. Just like a mother who takes her child on her lap and consoles him. | | | Witnesses of faith | Believe that in every situation God loves us. Share with the others in our group how much we live that. |
| We only have to open our eyes and our hearts to «see» him. When we experience his tender love, we can give it to those around us, especially those in pain or difficulty. We will become people who know how to comfort others**.** That is what the apostle Paul suggests to the Corinthians: «encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God» (2 Cor 1:4). | | | Have you ever consoled someone? Tell us about it. |  |
| This was also a deep personal experience of Chiara Lubich, who said: **«Lord, give me all who are lonely...** I have felt in my heart the passion that fills your heart for all the forsakenness in which the whole world is drifting. **I love every being that is sick and alone.** Who consoles their weeping? Who mourns their slow death? Who presses to their own heart, the heart in despair?” | | | God consoles sufferers also through us. Let us be his arms and his hands in the world. | Look at the situations and the people you meet every day. Sometimes out of habit or little attention we don’t even notice them; we might not even be aware of their pain. See if someone is suffering and find the way to love him or her (which means to console them). |
| *By Fabio Ciardi* | | |  |  |
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| ***Information:*** | | [**http://wordteens.focolare.org**](http://wordteens.focolare.org) | | [**centro.rpu@focolare.org**](mailto:centro.rpu@focolare.org) |