

Contextual Bible Study (CBS)

Report of the Introduction Workshop: CWM Graaff-Reinet Presbytery

1. Introduction

With this report, my co-facilitator and I give a summary of the CBS introduction workshop we facilitated with the Christian Women's Ministry (CWM) of the Graaff-Reinet Presbytery. Attach to this report will be an Addendum of a step-by-step outline of how the facilitation took place and of the outcomes of the facilitation.

Of the 11 presbyteries allocated to Rev Sifuba, the presbytery of Graaff-Reinet is one of the presbyteries that has not been introduced to CBS. Under the guidance of Rev Pedro, it was decided that Rev Sifuba will focus on the training of CBS facilitators and that the CWM and CYM leaders, who have been trained as CBS facilitators, will take charge of the introduction of CBS to the rest of the presbyteries that have not been reached yet.

After consultation with myself and my co-facilitator about our availability, rev. Pedro managed to set up a date with the CWM of the Graaff-Reinet presbytery for 13 May 2023. With the necessary communication (letter, emails, and WhatsApp's) the venue was secured with the Church Council URC Graaff-Reinet congregation and the Secretary of the CWM of the presbytery, Sister Delmarie, facilitated the rest of the arrangements.

2. Attendance and Facilitators

We were grateful that out of the 11 Congregations, sisters of 9 congregations came, through the rain and cold, to represent their CWM branch at the workshop. The president of the CWM of the presbytery, Sister Kayster, commented that our CBS workshop managed to bring together almost all the CWM branches for the first time after a very long time. They were indeed thankful for this achievement. One of the facilitators that was supposed to co-facilitate the workshop made an apology as her car broke down. Sister Konki was then assisted by Rev Pedro to facilitate the workshop.

3. The Sessions

Our Program started at 9:30 with registration. At 10 o'clock Rev Pedro opened the workshop with the lightening of a CBS candle and prayer. After the prayer Sister Kayster welcomed the facilitators and participants to the workshop and rev Pedro introduced us.

Session 1 was facilitated by Sr. Konki. She presented a summary of what CBS is all about. We have decided in advance to attend to the challenge of "LEADERSHIP", which has been identified as a priority by our synod, hence we did not do the SEE part of CBS. However, rev Pedro explained shortly how the SEE part is done with a group in the congregation. The 2nd Session, where we focused on DISCERNMENT and read together Exodus 18, was facilitated by Rev Pedro.

Because of the rain and the cold weather, we decided to do the ACT part at a follow-up workshop with the same group of sisters. This will give them time to think about the DISCERNMENT of Exodus 18 and of ideas as to how congregations can attend to leadership and build leadership capacity.

4. Conclusion

After a few words of thanks from the facilitators, Sister Virginia Mcinga also thanked us on behalf of the CWM and closed with a prayer.

Facilitator: Sister Nosipho Konki

Co-facilitator: Rev Stephen Pedro

Attendance register:

Nr	Name	Surname	Congregation	Contact	Email
1	Lenie	Booyesen	Graaff-Reinet	0737159939	
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3	Hannie	Louw	Pearston	0810832796	
4	Topsie	Verryne	Pearston	0632227285	
5	Sandra	Fala	Khanyiso	0713327316	
6	Lean	Jafta	Steytlerville		
7	Emma	Blaauw	Willowmore	0788194417	emmablaauw5@gmail.com
8	Anna	Luiters	Willowmore	0794794055	
9	Ronelle	Kortman	Midros	0789947952	
10	Johanna	Minnaar	Midros	0780507751	
11	Virginia	Mcinga	Graaff-Reinet Noord	0781467149	Wongamcinga1@gmail.com
12	Mercia	Rickers	Murrayburg	0632870929	Rickers.mercia@gmail.com
13	Koelie	Adams	Graaff-Reinet	0648810286	
14	Miriam	Wellman	Graaff-Reinet Noord	0633874064	
15	Christina	Basson	Murraysburg	0849626065	
16	Sanna	Hartzenberg	Steytlerville	0764341999	
17	Sanna	Liesing	Jansenville		
18	Glennda	Pieterse	Jansenville	0761112161	
19	Gertiena	Baartman	Rietbron	0723185481	gertienab@gmail.com
20	Slovien	Barrtman	Rietbron	0769018059	
21	Jennifer	Martins	Aberdeen	0610014498	
22	Shiela	Williams	Aberdeen	0767297907	

Addendum

Contextual Bible Study

CBS Introduction Workshop: CWM Graaff–Reinet Presbytery

Opening

Our Program started at 9:30 with registration. At 10 o'clock Rev Pedro opened the workshop with the lightening of a CBS candle and prayer. Thereafter Sister Kayster, the president of the CWM of the presbytery, welcomed the facilitators and participants to the workshop. Rev Pedro introduced the facilitators and went through the program of the day. **The program was put in front with the data-projector seeing that we did not made copies in advance.** Rev Pedro also explained the purpose of the day and our adjusted strategy to focus on the ministries for the last 4 months of the CBS project.

Session 1

Rev Pedro made a few introductory remarks about what we want to achieve with CBS and why it is important that the ministries embrace CBS and apply it in their congregations.

He then requested the participants to tell us what they knew about CBS to get an idea how thorough we need to be.

He then gave over to Sr Konki.

Sister Konki started off by explaining what CBS is all about.

She then continued to explain the three different parts of CBS in detail.

The SEE part:

The "See" part was presented in detail and the participants asked questions in between. They made comments on how CBS can also assist in how they can prepare their sermon preparations, also how it can change in the way they come together on their normal Thursday gatherings, another comment was how CBS can assist in tackling community issues.

One of the participants commented that CBS is an old method that has been used before and it will assist congregation a lot and it can take out the fear in when they have to prepare sermons and do discussions on issues pertaining them as CWM.

Rev Pedro also added, after Sister Konki's presentation, that when doing the "See" part, the facilitator must give the group the opportunity to come up with the challenges faced by the communities. The participants write the challenges on sticky papers. Thereafter the challenges are grouped together, all the ones that are related are grouped together. Then the group look at which of the challenges has the most sticky notes and start the conversation why. The group then further look at what lies beneath the challenge that has the most sticky notes, to try to get to the actual reason/challenge facing the community. This will ensure that the selection of the biblical text and the discernment of the text will touch on the heart of the matter.

Session 2 - The DISCERNMENT part:

The discernment part was facilitated by Rev Pedro.

He started off by explaining why we decided in advance to attend to the challenge of leadership and the scripture reading, namely that our Synod identified a few challenges for the synod and its congregations that we should attend to. BUILDING OF LEADERSHIP CAPACITY is one of these challenges, hence we request the CBS facilitators when they work with the presbyteries to focus on one of these challenges of our synod.

Rev Pedro then led the group in an intensive reading of Exodus 18, the text we have chosen in advance.

He started off with the question: **What the text is all about?**

- **Leadership**
- **Authority**
- **Its an account/testimony of God`s salvation of the Israelites/help from God**
- **Goodness of God**
- **Trust/Loyalty**
- **Delegation**
- **Mediation – God and people**
- **Cooperation**
- **Empowerment**
- **Respect/honour**
- **Commitment**
- **Endurance (Uithouvermoë)**

He then took the group through a discussion about the characters of the story.

Who are the characters in the story and what does the text say about them?

- **Jethro – priest, Moses` father-in-law, advisor, leader**
- **Moses – Son in law, Father of 2 sons, leader, mediator, advisor, representative of God, listener, analyst**
- **Zeppora&Sons – family of Moses, companions, support sytem**
- **People – advice seekers, obedient, patient, dependent on Moses**
- **God – Helper, Redeemer, Provider, laws**
- **Arron – support system, part of worship leaders**
- **Leaders – empowered, trustworthy, knew the law**
- **Pharoah - Oppressor**
- **Empowerment**
- **Respect/honour**
- **Commitment**
- **Endurance (Uithouvermoë)**

Feedback from the group:

The group discussed all the characters that were named in the text and what the text said about them. E.g., Moses being the leader, advisor, and Mediator of the group.

The group named all the characters that were quoted in the bible story and what their role was in the story.

After the analysis of the characters of the story he went further by asking the question: **What does the text say about leadership and why is leadership important?**

- **Teamwork, support**
- **Delegation and sharing of responsibilities**
- **Empowerment, both followers and leader, capable, equip others to take over leadership responsibilities**
- **Do everything to honour God**
- **God fearing**
- **Trustworthy**
- **Listener**
- **Available**
- **Responsible**
- **Obedient to God**
- **Discernment – ability to discern to put the right people @the right place**
- **Keep support system close**
- **Interested in the wellbeing of others**
- **Servitude**

In conclusion he led the group in attending to the question:

When you look at the leaders of today (Church and public) what are our leaders lacking?

- **Honesty**
- **Transparency**
- **Integrity**
- **Commitment**
- **Communication**
- **Ownership**

Feedback from the group:

This was one of the questions that had a bit of impact in the group, because the question was looked at a broader aspect, beyond the Church. The group stated how dishonesty, lack of transparency, and empathy were lacking in leadership today. They commented on personal stories that they had encountered, eg. One of the ladies commented by saying that leaders also leave you in the middle of the journey whilst assisting you. When things get hard, they leave. She spoke about how she met a toddler that was lost but did not get assistance from police and social workers that are supposed to help. She was assisted by other people in locating the family of the child.

Incidents during the discernment part to be noted:

There was one participant who made a comment regarding leadership, but the comment or answer was not from the text.

Rev Pedro commented on how we should be careful when discerning the text that we do not make assumptions of our own but stick to what the text says. We must take out from the text and not read anything into the text. I found that very important to note.

Feedback from participants:

"CBS was good for me so that I can understand the Bible better."

"It was helpful - how to better understand the Word of God and to incorporate in day to day living, interaction was wonderful."

"It was really good and gave me hope that we can bring our lost sheep back to the ministry"

Session 3 – The ACT part

Because of time constraints and that we were trained not to rush through a CBS, as well as the cold and rainy weather, and that some of the participants needed to drive back home more than 100 kms, we decided to do the ACT part at a follow-up workshop.

Sister Konki and a co-facilitator will return to the Graaff-Reinet Presbytery to do the "Act" part. The date has not been decided yet, but it should be done before the month of August.

Final comments:

It was heartwarming and inspirational to see that our leaders of congregations and our ministries will face rainy and cold weather and will get up early in the morning and drive hundreds of kilometers to attend a workshop about Bible reading and study. It affirms that there is a hunger among our congregant and leaders to grow spiritually and in leadership.

Also, the participation during the workshop was also something to be noted. The sisters really dove into the text/story and came up with profound answers. Maybe it was the story we read, or the body language and enthusiasm of the facilitators or the questions we prepared, but it was really a surprise to receive such enthusiasm from your group.

Sr Nosipho Konki