

**A survey of participants of the Ignatian exercises with bibliodrama  
that took place in Czestochowa, 21-29 October 2015**

**Participants:**

	<i>sex</i>	<i>age</i>	<i>occupation</i>
A	woman	40	kindergarten teacher (noun)
B	woman	53	doctor
E	woman	45	coach
H	woman	67	pensioner
I	man	48	doctor
L	woman	43	insurance consultant
R	man	56	IT specialist
T	man	44	physicist

**The results of the survey**

***1. Have you had any experience with bibliodrama before?***

- A: A few years ago I took part in bibliodrama workshops as a part of formation proces in out convent. I had chance to play the biblical characters and experience this form of contact with The Word of God. Before coming to that exercises I read an article of bibliodrama in the webpage of Inigo Foundation.
- B: It was my first contact with bibliodrama
- E: Yes, One-day workshop.
- H: I don't have any bibliodrama experiences
- L: The School of Service operating at the Jesuits Centre of Holy Spirit in Łódź from time to time use the elements of BD method. Usually we play some scenes.
- R: No
- T: No

***2. What were your expectations?***

- A: I was totally open on a new form of Ignatian exercises. I was carious. I wanted to use/ to bring out new forms of my self-expression. I expected that BD would facilitate the extraction of what should be extracted ☺.
- B: I expected silence, rest, reminder of the sermons of father Osuch!
- E: I didn't know what to expect

- H: I expected that we would play the pieces of Bible and that this will facilitate the understanding and experience – it would be a starting point for meditation.
- L: Coming to the synthesis with BD I expected a new form of praying. I am looking for such a form of praying that would be the most natural for my actual life activities.
- R: I expected small elements of drama inviting to the „correct” Ignatian exercises. As a background – playing biblical scenes.
- T: I expected the enrichment of experiences and fruit of the retreat.

### ***3. Was there anything that surprised you?***

- A: I was surprised by a different form of exercise silence. More demanding because I had to put attention on internal focusing. So-called body work was very helpful in this. Painting – a huge surprise. 😊
- B: I was surprised by the way of expressing feelings and experiences through painting.
- E: Yes. Painting (positive) and morning body work, however in the end I was quite bored of their monotony (a piece of text was unreadable). The exercises were less surprising because we had been asked by mail to take the appropriate clothes. Also a number of exercises before dinner.
- H: I was surprised by everything. The diversity and richness of exercise. Ingenuity in presenting the subsequent beatitudes. The painting of experiences. The leaders – laics and father director who were exercised with us (body work). Perfection in the development of each element. The subtlety and delicacy the leaders who were on the second plan. Internal and external discipline of everyone.
- L: Painting of the picture was not only a surprise but astonishment that it can be done in such a way. I did not have any certain expectations but the desire to be open to new that is why not many things could surprise me.
- R: Very wide and diverse repertoire of techniques used, thought-out concept of all morning activities.
- T: Painting of the picture, creative, emotional and intellectual experiences often surprised me in exercises.

### ***4. Did the Bibliodrama help you to prepare the prayer?***

- A: The more I went into the retreats the more the bibliodrama activities „carried me” to the prayer. My prayer was absolutely different from the other weeks of Ignatian exercises. Now I needed less words, more and more I WAS 😊.
- B: At the beginning they were difficulties and dispersion
- E: Yes
- H: Yes, it was a starting point. The activities showed a various aspects of the Beatitudes,

various ways of feeling and understanding them.

- L: At the beginning there were some difficulties in me to discern the content and translate them on a point of contemplation. But a Na początku były we mnie pewne trudności dostrzeżenia treści i przełożenia ich na punkta kontemplacji. But a huge help was the first conversation with a spiritual companion who everything (well, almost, the Holy Spirit did the rest) explained.
- R: Not in the first day, I didn't know how to link together the two parts of the day. Then, definitely yes. Sometimes they generated so many anchor points that they had to be carefully organized and even limited.
- T: Yes, besides intellectual introducing they also gave emotional introduction that was more personalized.

**5. *What was a particularly strong experience for you (in terms of positive or negative)? Can you say why?***

- A: A difficult for me was balancing between the Ignatian exercises and therapy. But it is my personal problem that I, in my opinion, overcome with a help of leaders.
- B: A strong experience was to learn my limitations at various levels. A strong experience for me was experience an attack and desire to bring me down, making me a victim.
- E: I can't point it now. I don't know if anything was „particularly strong” experience. But I had a lot of reflections.
- H: In the positive term – as I said above. I was surprised by painting my own picture as I felt like. It was my gift to myself.
- L: Experience the diversity in the community. God spoke to me also by speech, scenes and images of others. I really liked the building installations, both community and individual. But actually far more powerful experience was to build / work of my own and possibility to confront the results with the works of the others. Also the introductory body work exercises were important for me.
- R: Sharing experiences / feelings / impressions after the individual exercises both in pairs and in groups allowed comparing my own feelings with other people. But above all, it facilitated to organize my own. It was very helpful in the preparations for prayer and in meditation itself.
- T: Generally strong positive experience for me was non-verbal and conscious self-expression.

**6. *How painting a picture affected your experience of the retreat?***

- A: Painting a picture was once a prayer, once the preparation to it, once expression of the emotions, feelings, and once it ahead of experience in the sphere of feelings and the spiritual realm. It was a way of experience myself, discovering the truth about me, and truth about God in the same time – about His action and being inside me. It was naming and organizing my history, discovering my place in the world, the place of God in me, my place in God my place among the people, places of people in my world. It was a

place where I experienced a JOY of CREATION. The result is MASTERPIECE of THE HOLY SPIRIT and ME. OUR MASTERPIECE. In the previous Ignatian exercises I had the pictures inside me. I poured them into words. During this exercises I discovered a NEW WAY, after word and sound. And this way I would like to use after the exercises. ☺

- B: Painting a picture was the collecting of the emotions and experiences and an attempt to name them.
- E: Positively. It was for me the most interesting part of the retreat (also because all other forms – maybe in slightly different forms, but in comparable scene - I practice quite often). The painting had also something from a parable of the Potter.
- H: The picture reflected my problems manifested during exercises, adoration, changing emotions, discoveries about my dark side of the soul and pruning.
- L: The picture helped me to discover myself. "He told me," what is wrong in me. "He demanded" changes in himself, which greatly stimulated me to a deeper reflection. I prayed during painting so the picture is prayer and conversation with God for me.
- R: It cemented experience, emotions, events, making a synthesis in relation to the notes in the different way. It was easier to see certain processes.
- T: Painting a picture was one of the exercises, in which I experimented in order to get know the possibilities of my self-expression.

***7. Was there anything in the attitude of the leaders what helped you or prevent you from experiencing Bibliodrama?***

- A: Nothing bothered me, I was glad that the leaders were with us - such attentive and focused – LISTENING. Pater Director in gym suit – priceless. ☺
- B: Monotonous speech, in some cases unintelligible, diction?
- E: In my opinion, the change of the leaders was a trump (eg because for me it was another field of experience and reflection at various levels, but also the introduction of the volatility by usual variety). I would suggest however clearer instructions and not to talk to another leaders during exercises of the participants.  
I think that it would be valuable to give in the beginning directions how to share with others and about reflections on meditation. (It took me a while to figure out how in the thick of reflection at different levels, the multiplicity of feelings - not relate only of the development workshops, but about spiritual retreat, and I think that is the difference ☺.) From what I've heard some other participants also needed to refer themselves to the Ignatian exercise book to pick up all work in the spirit of the retreat.
- H: Mrs Krystyna spoke too softly (I have impaired hearing).
- L: Uśmiech i jasne podawanie reguł ćwiczeń sprawiły, że mogłam i byłam sobą.  
Leaders gave me a tremendous sense of security. A smile and bright providing the rules of the exercise gave me feeling that I could be myself and I was myself.
- R: No - they were hardly noticeable anyway - in a good way

T: The leaders acquit themselves well. Sometimes only I had the impression that some may worry about what I say.

**8. Can you see the first fruit of the exercises?**

A: PEACE AND DESIRE FOR RECONCILLATION with the person I hurt; A SENCE of INTIMACY with GOD - TREASURE! ☺. SENSE OF INTERNAL RECOVERY, THE DESIRE "to out of myself" and welcoming people / getting to know people as they are. SENSE of merger, ACCEPTANCE OF HISTORY OF MY LIFE, because there IS GOD (GOD = FATHER & MOTHER) and many, many ...

B: Determination of my limitations, focusing

E: Yes

H: I feel equal with other participants of the retreat. I accept difference and diversity. I noticed my reactions that make cause the difficulties in the making relations with other people. I saw my unforgiveness and I made an attempt to settle with the past.

L: Yes. One of the first fruit is the perception of life throughout the body and therefore praying to the Lord using smell, taste, color, voice intonation. I wonder if I would be able to praise the Lord in such way in my daily life.

R: Yes, definitely.

T: Greater getting to know myself, greater awareness of my own emotions.

**9. Would you come again to this type of retreat?**

A: 3xYES! ☺

B: No in the near future, but I don't say „never". I just have a lot to think over.

E: Yes

H: YES YES

L: I want to participate just only in such a form of retreat (without denying, of course, the sense and needs "pure" Ignatian Exercises).

R: Yes, for sure

T: Yes

**10. Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share?**

A: I don't know if everyone had a single room. I did. I think that in such form of retreat it should be a necessary condition ☺. I really enjoyed that sometimes the sharing was like a conference form real-life that we gave each other. For me, as a consecrated person priceless experiences were collaboration with laic people and accompany me by secular young person ☺. And the presence/possibility of getting to know the man's world. I

had feeling (despite moments of isolation - but that's my personal problem) of unity and equality before the Lord. THIS EXERCISES WERE A HUGE GIFT! LET THE LORD BLESS AND GUARD THOSE WHO MAKE THEM UNDER THE WINGS OF HOLY SPIRIT!

- B: For essential – I cannot evaluate. For more mundane aspects – it was cold, the rest was OK.
- E: *That person gave a page with advices how to lead the group.*
- H: It is worth to spread of this type of retreat, as well as materials with exercises. I missed the determination of the aim of the certain exercises. A lot of work sometimes had to make my mind to find the target, meaning of the exercises.
- L: Super idea of combining morning gymnastics with meditation. It might be worthwhile to consider "common" arrangement of the first prayer. I mean to devote more time to explain how to do it. But I have no confidence to the end of such a need, because perhaps, would create unnecessary unification. For me sharing the "bare" feelings "when I did it, it felt anger, joy, etc.", without explaining the context and causes was useless.
- R: A very good idea of joining exercises of the body with meditation. Absolutely different character of conversations with an accompanying person – this conversation with Mrs Dorota brought order in my day. Good day division – the separation by lunch facilitated the entrance into the silence and meditation.  
Bibliodrama much more launches and perpetuates emotions and allows for very good "binding" text in the meditation, creates a word - keys. Thank you very much for the opportunity to participate.
- T: At least one practical lesson in painting at the beginning under the supervision of someone experienced would be very useful. Making a "secret" notes gives the impression of assessment of the participants.