

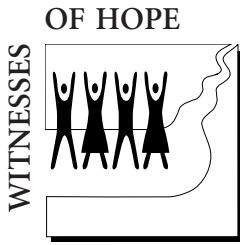
▣ Builders of Hope ▣

Book 3

Acting Through History

Acting Through History Editorial Team

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The acknowledgments continue on page 213.

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Acting Through History is the third book of the Builders of Hope series. This series was written to promote the development of the vocation of *jóvenes** as **laypeople** in the church and society. Although it was designed for evangelizing and missionary communities according to the Prophets of Hope model (see volume 3 of the Prophets of Hope series, *The Prophets of Hope Model: A Weekend Workshop*), this series can easily be adapted for other pastoral models. *Acting Through History* is intended for participants eighteen years and older who have gone through a sound process of formation in the faith and have developed a solid spirituality.

Acting Through History leads participants to discover their personal vocation and to begin to formulate a personal **life project**. It does this by helping them to know themselves better, to analyze the reality in which they live, and to reflect on their mission in history. The process proposed by this book is guided by a noble and great ideal placed before humankind: the ideal of the Gospel. The ultimate guide is Christ, who is alive and present in small communities of *jóvenes*. He will help shape and transform into reality the life project of *jóvenes* who want to pursue their personal vocation and to take control of their life freely and passionately. Mary, God's great collaborator in the history of salvation, will be their constant companion, a teacher who shows the way to Jesus, and a model of how to be active builders of their own history and coprotagonists with God in the history of humankind.

If you are implementing the Prophets of Hope model, it is suggested that you use this book after completing the following books in the Witnesses of Hope collection, in the order stated here:

*The first time any special term appears, it is presented in boldfaced type. Definitions can be found in the glossary. We suggest that before reading the book, you review the glossary to acquaint yourself with this vocabulary. We also recommend that persons responsible for coordinating and facilitating the meetings carefully study any special terminology used.

- *Dawn on the Horizon: Creating Small Communities*, which helps *jóvenes* to create a small community and to become aware of the relation between their faith, their lives, and their experience as an ecclesial community
- *In Covenant with God*, which facilitates their reflection on their baptismal covenant and on their mission in the world and in the history of salvation
- *Followers of Jesus*, which helps them to know Jesus better and motivates them to assume the mission of making the Reign of God present in the world

These three books help members of the small community to situate themselves in God's plan as they acquire a broader and more profound vision of their vocation and of their Christian mission. With that vision as a basis, *Acting Through History* offers participants the opportunity to carry out a process of discernment that helps them to see their life in a new way and to discover or clarify their personal life project.

The last two books of the Builders of Hope series, *Committed as Church* and *Fostering Culture and Society*, will help participants discern God's call to serve as members of the church and of the society in which they live. *Leaven in the World: Growing in Community Life*, from the Agents of Hope series, leads the participants to look deeply into the life and mission of their small community and to strengthen their mutual trust. For a complete view of the Witnesses of Hope collection and of the specific place of each series and each book within the collection, see appendix 2.

Objectives

The goal of *Acting Through History* is to help young adults to be responsible for their own history and for the direction of their life. This book presents a theoretical and practical framework for discerning God's special call, formulating a life project, and developing a spirituality. The process of the book provides participants with an in-depth formation that will enable them to follow God's call to be artisans of a new Christian order in society. To achieve its goal, *Acting Through History* proposes the following objectives for participants:

- To share their life experiences, challenges, concerns, and ideals with their small community and to use the knowledge they gain to guide and support one another in terms of their individual circumstances
- To formulate their life project by discerning God's call and using a personal diary to help them know themselves better, to become more aware of their reality, and to follow God's call
- To integrate the Gospel and the values of God's Reign in the society in which they live, by their lifestyle and their experience as a community, as leaders, and as prophets
- To rely on Mary, the model disciple, as their special companion during this stage of formation

Methodology

Like the rest of the books in the Builders of Hope series, *Acting Through History* follows a methodology based on an integral perspective of *jóvenes*. In contrast with the previous books in the series, which focus on the content of our faith and on reflection about life in the light of that content, this book gradually develops an emphasis on reflection in community on *jóvenes* as subjects of their own history. The later books, *Committed as Church* and *Fostering Culture and Society*, will help *jóvenes* complete the formulation of their life project, which is one product of that communitarian reflection.

Personal work during the meetings and, above all, between meetings is essential to the process presented by this book. The community plays an important supporting role. However, the most significant task falls on each young person in particular. That is why all participants are asked to keep a personal diary and use it to reflect on their life.

Description of the five modules

The modules in *Acting Through History* are described below.

Module 1: The initial journey

The initial journey helps participants see the importance of the personal life project and teaches them to keep a personal diary. It offers them a broader experience than that of their small community,

and it helps them enter the formation stage that they are starting with this book. The instructions for preparing for this journey are found on pages 18–19.

Modules 2 and 4: The cycles of community meetings

The community meetings facilitate the process of Christian formation in community and help participants discern their vocation and personal mission. Two cycles of meetings, plus a formation workshop and a retreat, follow the steps of the discernment process, which are as follows: (1) placing ourselves before God; (2) becoming aware of our being Christians in all situations; (3) analyzing our motivations, alternatives, and options; (4) integrating the plan of action into our personal life project; and (5) evaluating our decisions from a Christian perspective.

The material for each meeting can be covered in one or several sessions, depending on the situation of the community. The important point is to promote a profound reflection and an enriching dialog that enables participants to look deeply into the meaning of their life. The material in this book should be adapted as necessary to maintain the spirit of the meetings and allow important conversations among participants. In addition to focusing on themselves at this stage of formation, participants should be concerned about the life of the community and their **Christian praxis** in society and in the church. Therefore, in addition to dialog on each individual's personal life, there should always be time to talk about the life and actions of the community.

Module 3: The formation workshop

The formation workshop is planned for an entire day. It is advisable to have a good process facilitator help with this component.

Module 5: The retreat

The retreat helps participants take a significant step in formulating their life project and devising a plan of action to make it a reality. In addition, it celebrates their passage to the next formation stage. It is recommended that *jóvenes* from several small communities at the same formation stage participate together in the retreat in order to have a broader ecclesial experience. The retreat is planned for a weekend, but it can be adapted to be done in one day.

Documents

Acting Through History contains two types of documents: (1) informative articles whose contents provide explanation and in-depth exploration of the themes studied in the community processes, and (2) instruments of reflection that may be used on different occasions throughout life. It is recommended that participants write their responses to those reflections in their personal diary rather than in the documents, so that the documents can be used on other occasions.

Appendices

Appendix 1, “Evaluation Forms,” offers sample formats for preparing separate evaluations for the initial journey, the formation workshop, and the retreat. Those evaluations are important for helping the community recognize the contributions made by each component of the process, for identifying aspects of the process that need improvement, and for fostering the maturation of the participants and of the small community. Note that in contrast with the first two books in this series, this one does not provide forms for evaluating the community meetings. Instead, it relates the evaluation of the meetings to the discernment process, as explained in community meetings 7 and 12.

Appendix 2 is a chart of the Witnesses of Hope collection. This chart presents the different series in the collection and explains each book’s objectives and place in the Prophets of Hope process.

Note. The books of this series present the material needed to develop the initial journey, the community meetings, the formation workshop, and the retreat, in keeping with the Prophets of Hope methodology. *Jóvenes* will need other resources to develop warm-up exercises, organized games, and songs for the meetings.

Process and Scheduling: *Acting Through History*

