

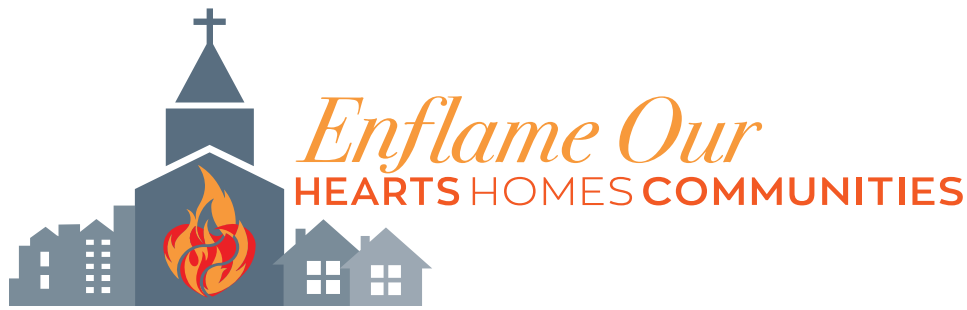


Enflame Our
HEARTS HOMES COMMUNITIES

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First - thank you! In gratitude for each of you that served as a delegate to the Enflame Our Hearts Convocation, we humbly appreciate your work. From the preparation work to the prayer; all of the time and passion that has been offered to the intentional efforts in building evangelizing cultures within each organization and parish. This work starts and flows through your individual relationships within parish communities. Our goal is to continue to equip you as the front line teams with tools, resources, stories and support as we all work to answer the call of the great commission together.

HOW DO WE USE THIS GUIDE?

This Convocation in a Box tool for parishes to utilize aims to create an effective local gathering that encourages evangelizing relationships. It captures and harnesses strategies used at the Convocation to inspire action and ongoing connection. We are the Church and we are all called to share the Gospel as missionary disciples. Prioritizing evangelization as the primary work of our Church, how can we best plan for the successful execution of that work within the unique call for each parish? This is one tool that we hope can aid that mission.

A few things to know about the Convocation in a Box tool that will help make your gathering a success:

- This is not an exact script. It is not an assignment from the Archdiocese. This is a tool for continuing the work of the Convocation and serves to supplement what you know is best for your local community. There will be parts that you need to lean into heavily, and some that don't work well for you at this time. This is an ongoing effort that requires intentionality and simplicity at each step along the way. Create a plan that is authentically yours. This is about people and relationships. Connecting with people is personal, and must be authentic to have lasting impact.
- First, your specific goal must be created and named. Your team should be prayerfully asking God to open their minds and hearts to what this experience looks like for their community. What is hoped to be gained from this offering? What specific action are you building toward? Who are we intentionally inviting? What will be your next-step invitation to those that are invited? Bringing a group together without a specific mission will not have a lasting effect on your community. Be simple and intentional with this mission. Think about what necessary and concrete work will be accomplished as an outflow of your gathering.

- Next, there must be an initial invitation into engagement. Simply put, there needs to be some skin in the game. Similar to the format offered for the Convocation, we encourage pre-work for participants that includes prayer, reflection and study. This helps to ensure that those coming to your gathering are doing so from the right place and are personally committed to action.
- The environment and mentality matter. We are offering a resource for creating a hospitable environment - this guide will help set the stage for authentic connection and relationships.
- Healthy and deep interactions between delegates is key. Purposefully creating moments of connection for participants is vital to encourage ongoing relationships.
- Interactive segments and small group exercises jump start healthy interactions and build connections. Suggestions for this are offered in our campfire structure sections.
- You will want to offer a variety of methods and approaches to discipleship as part of your overall content. There are videos, booklets, prayer guides and more available for sharing. This variety ensures a mix of offerings for people to self-select how they are best equipped for this mission. The goal is to offer experiences through, not one-way monologues.
- Don't just plan and present. Spend equal time listening. We all want to be heard and to feel that others have a genuine interest in us. Bring that into the room and allow it to lead your planning process.

Finally, this is truly a collaboration ... and the first version of Convocation in a Box. We also want to hear from you, and depend on your input to shape our offerings. Please let us know what pieces may be missing, or if there are tools that can better support your efforts. We want our work to be most relevant in your ongoing mission of building a culture of evangelization within your parish community. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do as a missionary disciple!



On the day of the Resurrection, the risen Lord Jesus encountered Cleopas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus. They were weary and downtrodden from their experiences over the last two and a half days. At first, they did not recognize Jesus as He began interpreting the scriptures as they referred to Him, starting with Moses and all the prophets. The disciples did not want Jesus to leave and invited Him to stay with them. In sharing a meal, He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread and the disciples said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” (Lk 24:32)

“WERE NOT OUR HEARTS BURNING WITHIN US?”

Is this not the deepest longing of Christian hearts?
That they might burn with desire for God,
with love of the One who loved us into existence,
the One who emptied Himself for our sake
and the One who gave up His spirit for our
salvation?

Welcome

*The Church of northeast Kansas longs for more hearts on fire for Jesus Christ. It is our **VISION to grow as disciples of Jesus and make disciples for Jesus.***

This is also the mission of the universal Church, prompted by the Lord's words to His apostles: "Go, therefore, and make disciples..." (Mt 28:19). But those who wish to make disciples must first be disciples with hearts on fire for the Lord and his bride, the Church.

Archbishop Naumann, along with parish pastors and other local Church leaders, desire that the people of northeast Kansas have hearts on fire for Jesus Christ. Recognizing the numerous present-day challenges that the Church faces in proclaiming the Gospel and making disciples, the Archbishop calls all the Faithful of this local Church to "build a culture of evangelization across the Archdiocese" (Shared Vision Document, 1st Key Initiative).

It is the Archbishop's desire to support parishes in building a culture that encourages the hearts of the many who already know Jesus and draws others to follow the deepest longings of their own hearts so that all might have hearts enflamed for Christ and His Church. This is the mission of the Church. As the Church, it is the ongoing invitation offered to every baptized Catholic. You are called to be on this mission in our Archdiocese.

Building this culture begins in the hearts and homes of the people of our archdiocese. A culture of evangelization must be built on a foundation of prayer. We grow as disciples of Jesus by continuing to strengthen our relationship with Him. This relationship is based on our openness to God in prayer. Prayer is not a part of our relationship with God; prayer is our relationship with God.

The fire of faith is burning in your heart. Thank you for your desire to grow this fire as an active missionary disciple. Through your intentional and active faith, may your heart, home and community be enflamed with the love of Christ.



PART 1

• *YOU ARE INVITED*

The Gospel calls every local Catholic Community to raise up men and women of faith who will...

- Shape the culture
- Serve as change agents
- Build a culture of evangelization
- Answer the call to missionary discipleship

Our Church needs active and dynamic Catholic witnesses to model their love for Christ to others; to be examples of holy living that reflect the goodness, beauty and truth so often diminished in our secular culture.

Our world is in desperate need of trailblazers whose lives testify to their relationship with Christ and His Church.

- We need men and women with hearts on fire for Jesus who encounter and invite others into genuine Christian friendships of accountability and accompaniment.
- We need leaders who nurture homes by providing support – opportunities and resources – for families to actively experience the love of Christ.
- We need witnesses to guide the Church in our world through an awareness of cultural and social sensitivities with responses rooted in love, mercy and hope.

What • Where • When

In 2015, Archbishop Naumann announced the mutually-shared vision that would guide planning for our Archdiocese. This vision was developed through prayer and listening as an archdiocesan-wide initiative. As a part of this process, three key initiatives were discerned for specific focus:

- 1. Build a Culture of Evangelization Come Holy Spirit ... enflame our hearts.**
- 2. Strengthen Marriage and Family Come Holy Spirit ... enflame our homes.**
- 3. Cultivate Relationships by Engaging in Works of Mercy Come Holy Spirit ... enflame our communities.**

These key initiatives offer intentional areas of focus for our evangelization efforts. The social pillars of individual, family and community provide the context in which converted hearts bring Christ to our homes, neighborhoods and places of work. In each of these areas, we are invited to live for Christ. At all times, we are called to reflect His love and mercy through our relationships.



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PART 2

• THE WORK OF OUR CHURCH

As a missionary disciple ...

PRAY – Dedicate yourself to intentional growth in personal prayer and the regular reception of Sacramental grace, especially in the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

- Evaluate your personal prayer life by reflecting on the following questions: Do I prioritize my relationship with Christ through personal daily prayer? How can I better know Jesus and hear His call for my specific work in bringing others to know Him?
- Evaluate your personal sacramental life by reflecting on the following questions: Do I prioritize experiencing Christ's grace through His Church by regularly receiving the Sacraments? How can I grow in holiness through His sacramental grace, especially in my reception of the Eucharist and Reconciliation?

STUDY – Consider your desire for personal formation. We have been given the great gift of Scripture – how is God calling you to deeper engagement with Him through your understanding of His Word? What other resources might fill your desire for more information about Christ and His Church? Scripture resources, faith formation classes and other materials are accessible online and in our Archdiocese. RCIA is one parish option for those seeking deeper understanding of Catholic beliefs and practices. Books and program studies may be available through your parish or community libraries. As you study, consider the experiences that have led to this point in your faith journey by reflecting on the following questions:

- Who initially introduced you to Jesus?
- How were you invited to deepen your relationship with Christ and His Church?
- What made this invitation and effective and meaningful experience for you?

PLAN – Complete your personal plan for evangelization. Be intentional in actively living out your call to mission as a disciple of Jesus. This means creating time for prayer and understanding the impact of our relationships with others as opportunities of invitation for them to know Christ. Review the Prayer, Care, Share chart and the Crowds to Three resource as templates for your plan.

Finally ... ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in this activity. This is God's mission and desire; we need only to be open to doing our part. God will do the heavy lifting!





Enflame Our
HEARTS HOMES COMMUNITIES

PLAN – Based on your group’s discernment, develop a plan (or refine an existing plan) for building a culture of evangelization through 2024 at your parish/organization. Be prepared to share this plan at the 2019 Convocation.

- Using the information collected from the delegate’s study, assess the current atmosphere for evangelization in your parish and local community.
- Explore the materials/programs in the Evangelization Hardware Store (EHS) and consider what options might best fill your parish/organization toolbox.
- Share insights and additional options for the EHS based on your experiences.
- Include specific tactics for communicating the prayer–care–share (p.43) message to individuals, families and your broader parish/organizational community.
- Identify individuals who will be responsible for specific components of the parish’s/organization’s draft plan. Who will take the lead in implementing each component of the finalized plan?
- Consider how you will measure success, as well as a timeline for assessment.

Finally, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and your team in these action steps. This is God’s mission and desire; we need only be open to doing our part. God will do the heavy lifting!

GENERAL CONSIDERATION

Individual hearts are enflamed through personal prayer, reading God's Word and receiving His grace in the sacraments.

Family homes are the frontlines of evangelization; for children the home is the first environment and opportunity to observe, learn and practice discipleship. Spousal love and holy parenting that is centered on God's love and wisdom serves to strengthen marriages and families. Families grow closer to God and each other when they focus on praying, caring and sharing His love with and for each other.

The Church is the living Body of Christ and our communities need our witness of Christ-like living. As Catholics we can join thousands of other Christians around Kansas City that are striving to love their neighbors and bring the Good News of Christ's love into their neighborhoods.

Catholic parishes and Catholic organizations should be committed to loving and serving our neighbors through corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Parishes and Catholic organizations that strive for the common good of the surrounding neighborhoods, the larger communities and the entire region become a tangible and visible presence of the Church.

Catholic life is rooted in each person having a deep personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a love for His bride the Church. In living out this vibrant relationship with Jesus and His Church, we are called to share the Good News of true freedom found in Christ. Archbishop Naumann is asking each member of the Christian Faithful, in this particular time, to deepen their relationship with Christ and step into the role of evangelizers by sharing their faith as reflected in lives of holiness and joy.

This work initially begins in individual hearts, desiring to grow closer to Christ through prayer, Sacred Scripture and frequent reception of the Sacraments. As hearts are filled with the love of Jesus, that love is reflected and experienced in the domestic churches of our homes. Husbands, wives, mothers and fathers give witness to Catholic faith and, as the first teachers of the faith, they serve to form their children as disciples of the Lord. As Catholic homes become fortified in Christ, they begin to brightly reflect His freedom and mercy to the wider community. We are faithfully inspired to share Christ's love with those around us so that the world will see the goodness and peace that God wants for all of His people.

“The Church’s vision for evangelization is not another task for a lay person to add on top of everything else that he or she is already doing; rather, it is integrated within one’s daily life. It is not to be complicated or burdensome, but simple and intentional” (Msgr. Richter, *Integrated Evangelization*, 3).

We must enflame our hearts, homes and communities so that our children’s children will know their value as sons and daughters of God, who have been promised the Good News of Sacred Scripture and given the gift of our Church to experience vibrant Catholic life.

PART 3

OUR CURRENT REALITY / BY THE NUMBERS FIRST...

OUR WORLD – HERE AND NOW

Our current culture, once grounded on Christian principles, has shifted to a post-modern secularism with a loss of regard for objective truth. Traditional Christian values no longer inform the basic social structure of our daily lives or governing policies.

The statements of our nation’s founders regarding unalienable rights were grounded in an understanding of objective truth, which today is being rapidly replaced by the prevailing theories of moral relativism and spiritual indifference.

At one time, evangelism was primarily associated with sharing factual information that bolstered faith and informed individual feelings. Conversely, in today’s world we find that people are more interested in a holistic experience of feeling that enkindles faith, which is eventually supported by facts. The great news is that our Catholic Church provides experience and truth. However, in today’s ongoing work of evangelization, we see that individuals and parish communities who recognize the desire for a genuine experience are generating greater spiritual vigor and enthusiasm for the faith. (Oestreicher, Youth Ministry 3.0, p. 100)

Pursuit of truth will always be a foundational element of Catholic evangelization and catechesis. But leading with recitation of dogmas

and doctrines misses a pivotal opportunity to win trust and speak to another’s heart.

When we focus on the basic truth and beauty of God’s love for each person, we open the door to the possibility of deeper pursuit of a genuine relationship with God. In this age of disconnection and isolation, reaching out in authentic friendship models the beginning of a personal connection that is ultimately directed to Christ and His Church. Through sharing our personal faith, we witness to the vibrancy, wonder and amazing adventure of belonging to God’s family and a Catholic community.

Many today are surrounded by – and often drowning in – information. In a world driven by relativism, there are a number of easily accessed and often conflicting facts available at our fingertips. People are over-informed about the *minutia* of their lives, but starved for a real sense of purpose and understanding. They desire physical and spiritual experiences that envelop them to the core. People, especially youth and young adults, are desperate to belong to something greater than themselves. They seek truth, beauty and goodness. This desire has been the deepest longing of man’s heart through all time. This longing reflects the innate desire placed in every soul by our Creator - to know, love and serve God - through one’s knowledge, love and imitation of Jesus Christ.

God attracts His wandering children through truth, beauty and goodness. This is the compass He has placed in the human heart to direct us back to relationship with Christ and His Church. He wants all of His children not only to seek, but to know His desires for their hearts. God alone is the source of all truth, beauty and goodness, and when we pursue these three elements grounded in the Divine, we are drawn closer to God.

OUR CULTURE – HERE AND NOW

For centuries, the Catholic Church was the driving force in western culture. Great works of art, music and literature point to the profound influence of the Church. Most charitable institutions of the time – schools, hospitals, orphanages and libraries – were founded by religious and lay members of the Catholic Church. These support structures recognized the dignity of each individual as a created son or daughter of God.

In political and commercial arenas that are often motivated by personal gain, the Church has traditionally offered a constant reminder that the success of a true leader is measured by their response to the least among us – by serving rather than expecting to be served. As institutions once operated by the Catholic Church and other faith-based ministries move to the for-profit sector or come under government control, we see that there are lasting effects on the fabric of our society.

These Christian charities, committed to the service of individuals and communities, were guided and animated by truth, virtue and Gospel values. Many service agencies, under corporate or government control, operate without the guidance of Christian principles and values. Many have abandoned the traditional guideposts of the sanctity of human life, dignity of the person, concepts of mercy and justice, as well as basic moral tenets of right and wrong. Charitable efforts must reflect a holy response to the Holy Spirit. When giving is detached from the motivation of Gospel love and discipline it can easily slip into justification for bad behavior and avoidance of suffering.

We know that only God’s love can mend the brokenness of the human heart, dysfunctional homes and a confused world. The Church, as the mystical body of Christ, is called to be the safe harbor for all of God’s suffering children. But this work requires a commitment to love as Christ loved and an intentional desire to put that love into action. The ever-expanding gap between the church walls and our neighborhoods, between parishes and the needs of the surrounding society must be bridged. A Church on mission—a Church active in neighborhood streets and in places of pain, fear or loneliness—is a Church that shapes the culture.

Christians who have had a transformative encounter with Jesus become missionary disciples who have a transformative effect on the surrounding culture. In living out your bold and vibrant love of Christ, **you become a culture-shaper.**

OUR CHURCH – HERE AND NOW

Clergy abuse and other Church scandals have broken the hearts and trust of Catholics and non-Catholics alike. (Geiger, Pew Research Center) Catholics must be a part of the healing and recognizes the need to earn back that trust. Clergy, religious and the laity must re-commit to ensuring the sanctity of the Catholic Church. As we share the good news of Jesus, we must remember that the memories of disturbing news reports about the Catholic Church are tangible in the minds of many. Each of us needs to be an exemplary witness of Christ, and be ready to answer the honest, often difficult, questions about the sins of our Church’s leadership. From the beginning of the Church, there have been betrayers. Jesus had Judas, and the modern-day Church has it’s own. We, like Jesus, must strive to stamp out their evil work and presence in Christ’s Church. We must commit to understanding by first listening to the outrage of our community. We must repent for our sins and those of our leaders.

We must humbly love the hearts of others, seek Christ and warmly share the redemptive story of Christ’s love for sinners.

A renewed heart faithfully strengthens a home and intentionally supports (in prayer and action) a renewed community. This is the process of restoring relationships to be Christ-centered in the Catholic Church and the culture that Archbishop Naumann desires for our archdiocese. Archbishop tells us, “This is not a moment for any of us to allow ourselves to yield to natural feelings of discouragement and despair. It is an occasion for all of us to recommit ourselves to living lives of integrity.” (The Leaven, 31 August 2018) This is dynamic change for our hearts, homes and communities - and **you are a change agent.**

By The Numbers...

As we go into the mission field and share our faith with others it is important to have an awareness of the environment.

National studies offer the following data:

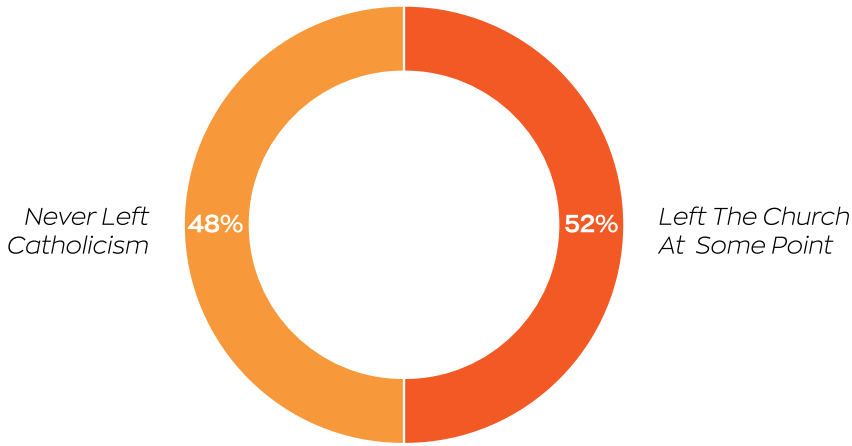
Catholics and “Nones” – Catholics make up 20.8% of self-identified religious persons in the United States (including Christians and non-Christians). In comparison, religious “nones” make up 22.8% of the same group. These “nones” include those identifying as “nothing in particular” to be 15.8% of the group. (Pew Research Center, Religion in America)

Most Americans That Know a Catholic American feel more positively about religious groups, particularly Catholics and Jews, than they did in 2014. Despite the polarizing secular culture, Americans have become increasingly friendly to organized religion. In fact, “a large majority of Americans (86%) say they personally know someone who is Catholic.” (Mitchell, Pew Research Center)

Numbers of Former Catholics Compared to Catholic Converts - “Nearly a third of all U.S. adults (31.7%) were raised Catholic, and most of them continue to identify as Catholics today. But nearly 13% of all Americans are former Catholics – people who no longer identify with the faith despite having been raised in the Catholic Church. By comparison, there are far fewer converts to Catholicism; 2% of all U.S. adults now identify as Catholics after having been raised in another religion or without a religion. This means that there are more than six former Catholics for every convert to Catholicism.” (Wormald, Pew Research Center)

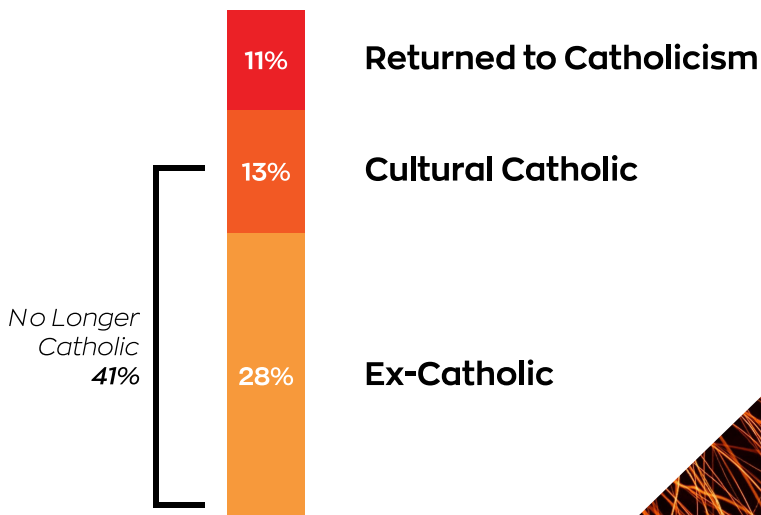
“Cultural Catholics” - Additionally, one in ten (9%) of Americans self-identify as “cultural Catholics.” This group cites affiliation based on ancestry, culture and/or beliefs. Some of these “cultural Catholics” nominally engage in faithful activities including attending Mass, receiving the Sacraments and observing the liturgical season of Lent. “Some of these cultural Catholics may in the future even return to Catholicism – 43% of cultural Catholics who were raised Catholic say they could see themselves returning to the church someday...” (Masci, Pew Research Center).

About half of those raised Catholic leave the Church
(sometimes temporarily or permanently).



Source: Pew Research Center Survey of Catholics & Family Life, May 5 - June 7, 2015
"Never Left Catholicism" includes those who did not answer QN14.

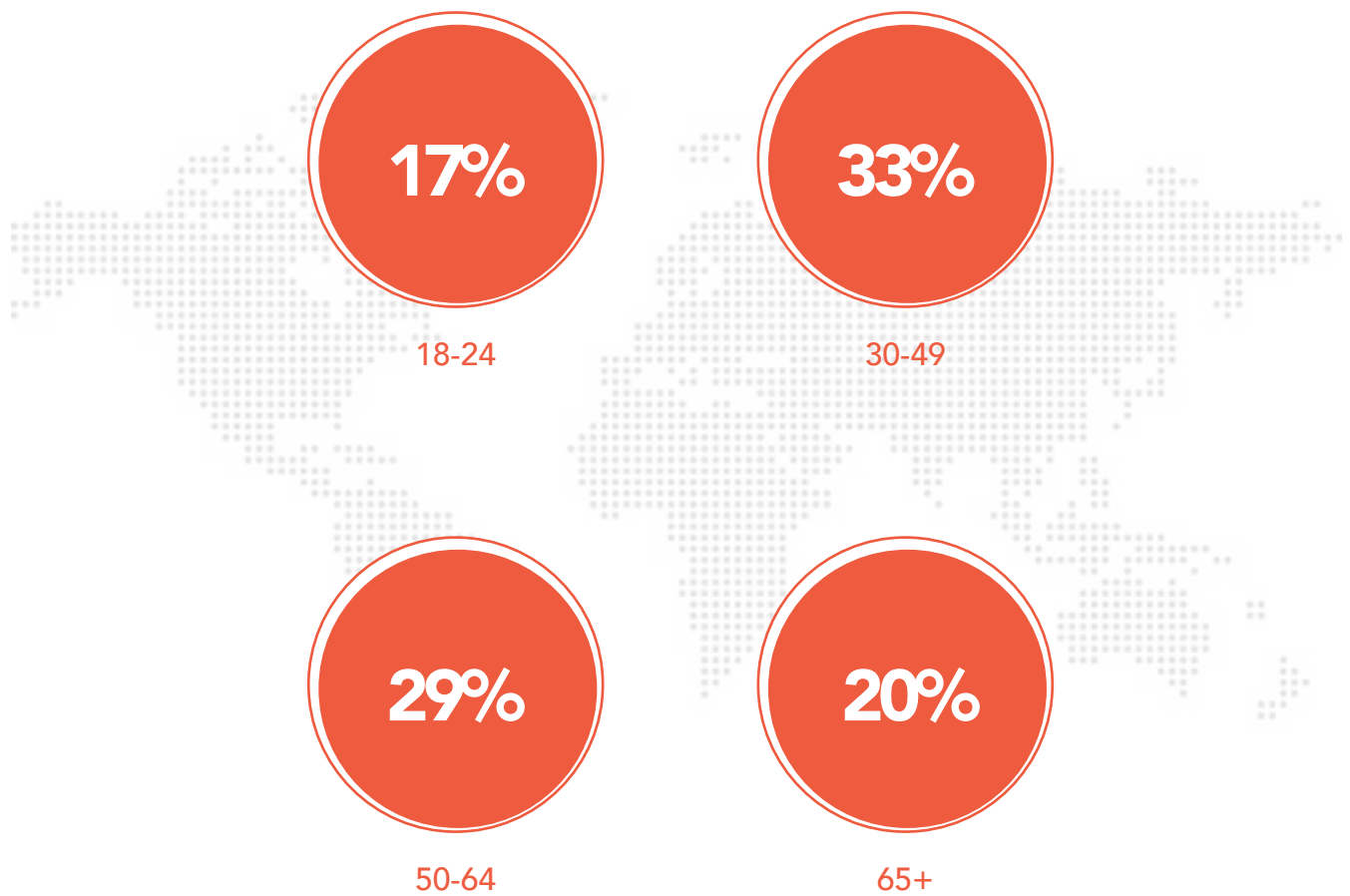
The 52% who left the Catholic Church include...



FAST FACTS

Catholics in the U.S. by Age (sample size 7061)

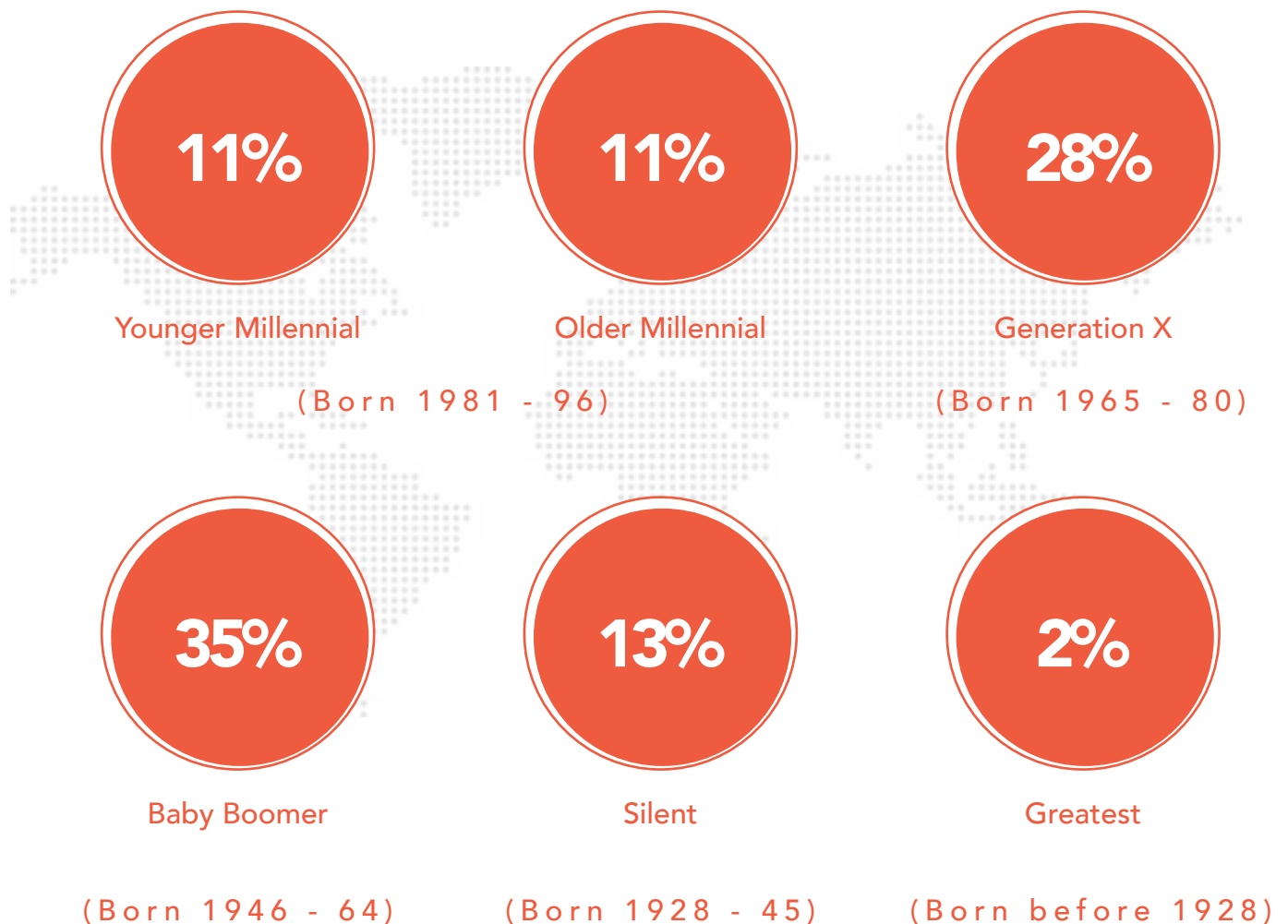
(Pew Research Center, Religion in America: Age Distribution)



FAST FACTS

Catholics in the U.S. by Generational Group (sample size 7061)

(Pew Research Center, Religion in America: Generational Cohort)



Further Study...

The following excerpt from Sherry Weddell’s book, *Fruitful Discipleship: Living the Mission of Jesus in the Church and the World*, offers additional perspective on the large percent of Americans who already have some kind of connection to Catholics and/or the Catholic Church and what that could mean for our evangelization and discipleship efforts (pp. 55-57, 2017, all italics original to Weddell):

In 2014, the new Pew Religious Landscape Survey found that 45 percent of U.S. adults (approximately 110 million) are “connected” in some important way to Catholicism. This means that 110 million Americans feel some important bond with the Catholic Church or the Catholic faith. No other religious tradition in the United States has anything like this reach. It means that nearly one of every two American adults you meet has a significant tie to the Church.

FOUR BASIC CATEGORIES OF CATHOLIC CONNECTIONS

(From Weddell) :

1

Twenty percent of U.S. adults have a Catholic identity. Ask them their religion and roughly 49 million American adults will say, “I’m Catholic.”

2

This is where the real surprise comes in. The second cohort of people with a significant connection to the Church are the 9 percent of American adults (22 million) who say they are not Catholic religiously but that nonetheless feel “culturally” or “partially” Catholic anyway.

3

Another 9 percent of American adults – that is, another 22 million people – call themselves “ex-Catholics.” These are not merely people who drifted away from the faith but rather people who define themselves as having left the Church. It is a harder stance, often fueled by some kind of wound or anger or disbelief. Yet even among that group, 8 percent (1.7 million) told Pew that they were open to returning.

4

This final group – which includes 8 percent of American adults (20 million people) – feel “connected” to Catholicism through Catholic family, friends, institutions, practices, or values.

We stand at a stunning crossroads: millions are jettisoning their Catholic identity but simultaneously nearly half the adult population of the United States feels some serious connection to the Catholic Church. Every one of those connections is a potential bridge of trust across which we can walk as evangelizers to invite them to begin the journey to intentional discipleship, either by way of return (for former Catholics) or baptism. What an incredible evangelical opportunity if we have the will to take advantage of it!

OUR PARISH COMMUNITIES – HERE AND NOW

Parishes play a significant role in creating a culture of evangelization.

Every individual Catholic is provided the community of parish life as both a gift and a responsibility – much like a domestic family. We are given the gift of grace through the Sacramental life and liturgy, as well as offerings of ministry and fellowship.

Our Sunday experience is an important aspect of an irresistible church. Fr. James Mallon says, “Church renewal is all about the three h’s: hospitality, hymns and homilies.” (Mallon, *Divine Renovation*, p. 110) Others have called music, preaching and community the holy trinity of church vibrancy. Catholic parishes are called to carry out the ministries of music and preaching in uniquely Catholic ways that reflect their specific functions as a part of our liturgy. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that song and music have a proper place in connection to the liturgy, in that they offer a “beauty expressive of prayer, (opportunity for) the unanimous participation of the assembly, and the sacred character of the celebration” (*CCC, 1191*).

Our liturgies are not intended for entertainment; they are intended to be encounters with Divine Mysteries that when celebrated well are often deeply moving experiences for those who are fully, actively and consciously engaged.

Excellent liturgy – liturgy that draws those present into the holy mysteries being celebrated – should always be the goal. Good Liturgy has the power to take a believer out of the world in which they feel beaten up or haggard, and reveal God’s love for them. This experience serves to refresh their spirit, unite them to His Body and renew their commitment to engage in the mission of the Church. As a delegate, you are being asked to listen to the people in your parish pews and others within your parish boundaries – How might you enhance your parish’s Sunday experience?

The human heart longs for transformative encounters. Parish and diocesan offerings in the form of retreats, programs and small group gatherings, provide opportunities for such encounters and help build community. Belonging to a community creates feelings of welcome and warmth. Programs (such as Light of the World, SINE, Teams of Our Lady, Encuentro, Cursillo, Christlife, Alpha and Christ Renews His Parish) have powerfully affected hearts in many of our parishes. These programs have provided a platform for parishioners to share their personal stories and journeys with each other. These close community experiences encourage deep sharing of the interior life and serve to shrink the distance between people. Spiritual encounters with the Lord are very often revealed in close, small communities.

When we take the time to know and care for each other, we invest in the creation of community. Hospitality, welcome and the “Sunday experience” are greatly enhanced when parishioners know and love each other. Building strong community can be a slow process, but the results are robust and enduring. What can your delegation do to build greater community – in your individual sphere of influence and in your parish community?

OUR MISSION - HERE AND NOW

Each one of us has experienced the difference between genuine concern and a selfish agenda. We have not only been on the receiving end, but have also engaged others in an inauthentic relationship at some point in our lives. This is the result of sin and our human tendency toward pride. When we place our desires above the dignity of another, we enter into a relationship of use. This type of selfish relationship must always be avoided, especially in the work of sharing Christ. In reflecting genuine concern, the first response must always be to listen. As stated by Younglife founder, Jim Rayburn, one must “earn the right to be heard.” (www.younglife.org) This is especially true in the world today. We are constantly bombarded by counterfeit offers of selfish pleasure and personal gain. We have a multitude of options to “feel better” at any given moment, with no recognition of the deepest void for God in our lives.

We are surrounded by messages offering false freedoms and disingenuous love.

If the world around us is going to know the freedom and love of Christ, believers must bring His message to them. We are called to be missionaries within the context of our daily lives. We cannot presume for those outside of the Church to travel to our buildings or attend our events, we must be willing to travel to them. Pope Francis tells us that,

“It is not Christian to expect that our brothers and sisters who are seekers should have to knock on our doors; we ought to go out to them, bringing not ourselves but Jesus. He sends us, like those disciples, to encourage others and to raise them up in his name. He sends us forth to say to each person: ‘God is asking you to let yourself be loved by him’”. (Pope Francis, Mass Homily, 28 October 2018)

Few may be called to live out their mission in the traditional sense of traveling to foreign lands, but each one of us is called to mission where we stand. We must pray for the Holy Spirit to show us how to meet our neighbors where they are ... where we are most needed. When we make ourselves open and available, God will always be present.

We know and trust that the Holy Spirit is at work in each person, regardless of the response we might see in their lives. What is needed to bring Christ to others is a person open to the work of the Holy Spirit and actively reflecting His love in that moment of encounter.

Catholic teaching tells us that “evangelization is the essential mission of the Church” (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14). In response to the gift of faith He has placed in our hearts, we desire to know, love and serve God in our daily lives. To do this we must rest in God. Our strength for mission is found in making time to ponder Scripture and to pray intimately and deeply with our Lord. In focusing our thoughts and actions on Him, we grow in relationship to His merciful heart for each one of us. To truly know and love God creates an abundance of grace that overflows from our heart to encounter the hearts of others. In this encounter, we “bring the Good News of Jesus into every human situation ... seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself.” (EN, 18) We are not required to have all the academic answers, but to respond to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and relationships with others. We are called to trust.

The greatest commandments given to us in Scripture are to love God above everything and to love one another as He has loved us (Matthew

22:36-40). This mandate requires us to prioritize and deepen our personal relationship with Christ and His sacramental Church. True love for another person obliges us to deeply desire this relationship for them, as well. In following God’s greatest commands, you are called to this great work of introduction – **you are a pivotal player in building a culture of evangelization.**

Engaging in this work is a genuine response to the most significant call we receive in our baptism – to reflect Christ’s love in witnessing lives of holiness and joy. This is a bold endeavor that requires deep faith and great trust. Unless we maintain an ongoing and meaningful relationship with Christ, we will not be able to offer this reflection to others.



If Jesus has given us the mission to evangelize, then He wants us to have and to experience a lived relationship with Him. Do I give myself permission to want that? Do I give myself permission to embrace Jesus’ desire to have that relationship with me? Do I often tell Jesus that I want to experience His presence and love? The first and last work of evangelization is to long for that more and more.”

(Msgr. Richter, IE, 24)

When we, as people of God, are spiritually alive we become magnets to those that are lost, wandering and seeking around us. In sincerely following Christ with an open and trusting heart, we become disciples. As members of the Body of Christ, our love for others compels us to share our Savior; to magnify the grace and glory that we have individually been given and freely accepted. We become the initial experience of God for others. This is living faith in action – this is missionary discipleship and **you are invited to be a missionary disciple.**

AS CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS...

We are called to build a culture of evangelization in our own hearts with an intentional effort to foster personal prayer and intimate relationship with Christ.

Come Holy Spirit ... **enflame our hearts.**

We are called to build a culture of evangelization within our families with a focus on developing safe havens for love and mercy inside our domestic churches.

Come Holy Spirit ... **enflame our homes.**

We are called to build a culture of evangelization within our parish neighborhoods as we model holy living in charity and service that reflects the desire of God's heart for all people to experience peace, love and goodness.

Come Holy Spirit ... **enflame our communities.**

PART 4

KEY LEARNINGS ON EVANGELIZATION

Evangelization is an “echoing” of the Good News of Christ. A local priest describes evangelization as a “joyful sharing of one’s transformative encounter with God in a manner that inspires others to seek such an encounter.” This involves being a visible witness of God’s great love to others. We have been commanded to “go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28: 19-20)

Evangelization is not an optional activity – it is the primary function of the Church. Pope Paul VI wrote “the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church” (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 14). He reminds us that “Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize....”(EN, 14). We must realize that the task of the Church is the mission of His people. We are the Church. We work in conjunction with our priests, religious, bishops, and pope – we are called to labor alongside our clergy and religious orders. All of us together serve as members of the Body of Christ. Pope Paul VI issued a reminder that this work entails “the carrying forth of the Good News to every sector of the human race so that

by its strength it may enter into the hearts of men and renew the human race” (General Directory of Catechesis, 46). Each one of us has a unique role to play in the work of evangelization.

“The missionary mandate of Jesus to evangelize has various aspects, all of which, however, are closely connected with each other” (GDC, 46).

- **“proclaim.”** (Mark 16,15)
- **“make disciples and teach.”** (Mt. 28,19-20)
- **“be my witness.”** (Acts 1,8)
- **“baptize.”** (Mt.28, 19)
- **“do this in memory of me.”** (Luke 22,19)
- **“love one another.”** (John 15,12)

Evangelization is often defined as the work of passing on the faith; it requires a combination of art and science. We have all been given particular gifts and talents to share with others in our work of evangelization. “Proclamation, witness, teaching, sacraments, love of neighbor: all of these aspects are the means by which the one Gospel is transmitted and they constitute the essential elements of evangelization itself” (GDC, 46) Each of these elements is vital to the work as it serves another soul. “Evangelization ... must develop its “totality” (in) witness and proclamation, word and sacrament, interior change and social transformation.

Those who evangelize have a “global vision” of evangelization and identify with the overall mission of the Church” (GDC, 46). The scope of evangelization is broad. In some instances we will be present to another person in many aspects of this work, in other situations we may be called to just one opportunity for encounter of evangelization. Whatever the role, we know that the process of evangelization requires patience and trust.

It is not enough to engage in good works, receive the sacraments, disclose our witness story or share the Gospel with others. All of these efforts must be directed towards bringing another individual into closer relationship with Christ and His Church. As members of the Body of Christ, we are reminded that “the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert” (EN, 18). We know that Christ desires relationship with each person through the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Our genuine desire for another cannot be outdone by God’s desire for the conversion of their heart. Respect for another’s beliefs or way of life should not discourage us from sincerely listening, genuinely loving and thoughtfully inviting them to grow in their relationship with Christ. We are not motivated by our own interest or measure of success, but by offering ourselves as conduits for the work of the Holy Spirit. We should never shy away from offering an invitation to grow closer to Christ or the Catholic Church, lest we underestimate the presence of the Holy Spirit in each individually created soul. Alone, we are unable to convert hearts; but in opening our hearts to others and sharing Christ’s work in our lives we become evangelizers of God’s love.

ENCOUNTERING GOD

A first generation encounter of God is the deepest desire of every human heart. Throughout human history we see those who encounter God have been changed forever. People do not want to just hear about God; they want to be introduced to Him personally. They want to hear Him in personal prayer and inspired Scripture. They want to feel His presence in their daily lives. They want to know the intense and overwhelming love of the Father as a unique child of God. In this experience, these seekers often need a guide. You are a key leader in your parish or organization and you are being asked to take on this role of guide for others. By nature of your baptism, you have received the gifts necessary to serve in this role when you were anointed priest, prophet and king. In embracing this opportunity and the Sacraments, you will be given the grace necessary to fulfill this role in your daily life.

The Church asks you to allow your heart to be enflamed, as it was for the first time at your baptism. The Church asks you to open your soul to God's grace and proclaim His presence in your life – to be who you are, where you are.

WHO ARE YOU? WHERE ARE YOU?

You are a beloved child of God. He constantly seeks you in all things. Every moment of every day, you are offered God's grace and goodness. Do you truly believe that you are a beloved child of God? Do you feel His grace in your life? Do you have awe and wonder for God's goodness? What is your response to His great generosity? We are built to honor God with gratitude. As a key leader in the Catholic community, the Church is asking you to be who you are ... to be the person that God is calling you to be in this moment. Even in our doubt, we must reach out to Him. Pray for the grace to trust in God's desire to be closer to you, to have you live in His love and to fill you with the Holy Spirit to serve as a guide to those around you.

PRAYER AND OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

Prayer connects us to God. It is the lifeblood of our spiritual life; the channel through which we maintain ongoing relationship with our Father. If we do not pray, we become disconnected from God. Just as the human relationships in our lives depend on maintaining connection, even more so does our fundamental relationship with God require attentive prayer. It is impossible to maintain a relationship with Christ without prayer. We are His precious children – He yearns to be invited into intimate relationship with each of our individual hearts. Just as many of us work to be good parents, God desires a vibrant, warm and close relationship with each of His children. He wants us close so that He can guide and protect us. He wants to hear us. He wants to talk to us. Prayer is more than an act of repeating memorized verses. Repetition has a place in settling our minds, but connecting to God through prayer requires a deeper intimacy and vulnerability. Prayer is talking to God in your own words from your heart. God desperately desires our invitation to accompany us through the anger, pain, hurt, and disappointments of life.

Please make time to draw closer to Him in order to listen to God's call for you. Create a space in your schedule when you can intentionally read Scripture, pray openly in conversation with Jesus about everyday matters and work to be a blessing in your home so that we all might be a greater blessing to our Church and our community.

Enflame Our HEARTS HOMES COMMUNITIES

God wants to share in our laughter and tears. God loves when we are fully human and open – when we are unscripted, raw, honest and unrehearsed in our conversations with Him.

In all moments of our lives, God desires to be fully present. As we make decisions, large and small, we are called to reach out to our Father. Without prayer we choose to disengage from Christ. Losing this connection leaves us to rely solely on our human abilities, which lead to narrow-mindedness and vulnerability to the influence of Satan. As he did to Adam and Eve, Satan twists and trips up our decision-making if we rely completely on our humanity. Prayerful decision-making opens us to the possibilities that Christ has in store and calls us to a deeper relationship with God. We no longer control a situation, but practice discernment in opening our lives to God's will. This strengthens our decisions with the hope of God's grace and the benefit of His eternal wisdom. Prayer to Jesus and the intercession of the saints, particularly Mary our Mother, allows us to share in spiritual vision and accompaniment. When we cooperate with the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are equipped with the necessary gifts to strengthen our faith, deepen our trust and secure our hope in God. We cannot be strengthened to live out our Catholic faith without prayer; only through prayer can our hearts be transformed so that the efforts of our lives can reflect the mission and joy of our baptismal call.

Astronauts need oxygen. Christians need prayer. Prayer should take many forms, both in long and short conversations with God. As in any good relationship, we experience different forms of sharing. We desire retreat experiences and regular deep prayer times; we also need flash conversations and spontaneous prayers throughout the day. God desires this ongoing connection with us; a deeper relationship than that of our spouse or best friend. From the time of our conception, God has been whispering to us and caring for our heart. He is not interested in being an external observer – He wants an interior relationship of deep intimacy. He created our hearts, but respects our free will in inviting Him into intimate relationship with us. We invite God inside through prayer. Intimate and vibrant prayer strengthens us to live the Gospel. In living the Gospel, prayer equips us to be effective evangelists. Ultimately, an evangelist helps others develop deep relationship with Jesus through living a Catholic Christian life... the life of a prayerful follower of Christ. The necessary first step in becoming an effective evangelizer is to develop a deep prayer life. The second step is to reflect this intimacy with Christ by nurturing and encouraging a deep prayer life in those that we accompany.

We support others in prayer when we invite them to share their deepest concerns and emotions with God. We witness the beautiful dependence and freedom that occurs when we connect with Christ through prayer. We encourage them in knowing that God is already present in their lives and desires intimacy with their hearts. We model the words that can open hearts by praying with them, aloud in our own words, when we are in time of counsel with them. Incorporating Scripture into this prayer deepens our understanding of God’s Word as an instrumental directive at all times. As a Gospel people, we are called to spend intentional time in prayer with Scripture. Reflecting on His Word allows God to speak to our hearts through Scripture. The Word is His love letter to our hearts—prayerful reading of Scripture and quiet reflection allows us to hear Him.

PRESENCE

Your presence in each moment is critical in the life of an active Christian. Each moment is an opportunity to witness appreciation, joy and gratitude. Each moment our children, spouse, friends and neighbors are observing how we respond to what life throws at us. These moments are an opportunity of divine appointment for each of us. Divine appointments are an occasion of sacred encounter with Christ through another person. Much of our time is spent in planning for the next thing or reviewing the last thing – we are often not mindful of the present moment. We are missing pivotal opportunities for sacred encounter. Divine appointments can be life changing; our decision to recognize or ignore these moments can have lasting effects. God creates these appointments for us to participate in His loving plan to draw others to Him and His Church. We are told, “whatever you do unto the least of these you have done unto me”. (Matthew 25:40) Little by little, in these moments, we can choose to grow closer or further from the hearts of others.

Our divine appointments are not miniscule. They are opportunities for interactions with key people in our lives. God’s infinite orchestration has no accidents; those around you share your space for a purpose designed by our Creator. Pope Francis calls us to grow in *cercania* (or nearness) to those around us. Pope Francis shares that faith is best transmitted over small distances. He tells us “[c]loseness: that is the secret to communicating the heart of the faith, and not a secondary aspect.” (Pope Francis Mass Homily, 28 October 2018) It is in this closeness that we are open to real encounter. “Faith has to do with encounter, not theory. In encounter, Jesus passes by; in encounter, the heart of the Church beats. Then, not our preaching, but our witness of life will prove effective.” (Pope Francis, Mass Homily, 28 October 2018) Minimizing the distances in our lives allows us to

connect to those people that God has put in our unique surroundings.

LISTEN AND NURTURE

Do you actively nurture the ones you love? Just as Adam was directed to nurture Eve and the Garden (Genesis 2), we are called to nurture the key relationships in our life. This can be difficult – relationships are fragile and demand great care. We cannot put relationships on autopilot or at the end of a long to-do list. Strong relationships are the result of effort and cultivation. We often hear from couples celebrating their 50th anniversary that the success of their marriage depended on their active nurturing of their relationship. In those times that they were tempted to approach their relationship without priority or interest, they experienced the roughest periods in their marriage. Healthy connection requires personal attention and deep conversation. We must aspire to share thriving relationships that allow us opportunities to grow closer to each other and Christ. In that effort, we best live out the sacred position God has given us in influencing another and reflecting His love in their life.

Listening is a work of love and must be an active part of nurturing. The work of listening and nurturing are tied together in building affinity and connection. Pope Francis tells us that listening is “the apostolate of the ear; listening

before speaking.” (Mass Homily, 28 October 2018) Do you listen, without interruption, to those closest to you? It can be very challenging to listen intently, however it is the most powerful action we offer in evangelization. Focus on being an intentional listener in your life for a deeper connection of trust and stronger relationships of love. In doing this, you will reflect the love of God to others.



“The children of the heavenly Father are concerned with their brothers and sisters, not with useless chatter, but with the needs of their neighbors. They listen patiently and lovingly, just as God does to us and to our prayers, however repetitive they may be. God never grows tired; he is always happy when we seek him. May we too ask for the grace of a heart that listens.”

*(Pope Francis, Mass Homily,
28 October 2018)*

MISSION AND FRUIT

To be on mission for Christ is to practice intentional listening. Before sharing Christ's love, we must listen and genuinely understand the pain of another. We validate another's experiences when we take the time to enter into their suffering with a sincere willingness to journey with them. This is the heart of the work of evangelization. Our journey with another becomes an active work of love through accompaniment. We are called to practice accompaniment as a shoulder-to-shoulder walk through the hills and valleys of life with those God has placed in our lives. We are not called to have a more convincing argument or an overwhelming academic knowledge of the faith – we are called to validate the individual dignity of each person we meet as a child of God. In this validation, we strive to introduce them to Christ and invite them to a deeper relationship with Him. If we focus on winning an argument, we invite deeper conflict into a sensitive situation. Our rhetoric becomes repulsive when it is not offered in the context of understanding and respect. When we evangelize in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, we recognize the value of our personal witness to the abundant life through listening and investing in those closest to us.

Scripture directs us to judge a tree by its fruit (Matthew 7:16-20). In the same way, we choose to adopt or reject what others are sharing by what we see in their lives. This is not judgment, but an

evaluation of what we are interested in pursuing in our own lives. In this way, we know that genuine beliefs must be reflected in a person's life if we are to duplicate them in our own. It is disingenuous to call ourselves Catholic if we do not live a life that reflects God's love for others and our confidence in the sacramental grace of His Church. The fruit of our faith must be lived out with those we love. When we invite others to spend time together, we open the opportunity to develop deep relationships and experience conversions of the heart. **Are we inviting our family, friends, co-workers and neighbors to engage in meaningful listening and conversation?**

BAPTISM AND EVANGELIZATION

Baptismal vows are powerful promises made to Christ in the presence of a supporting faith community. It includes the promises to know, love and serve Christ. Within this call, we are commissioned with the grace to evangelize. Those desiring baptism for themselves or their children are asked a version of this question as part of the Rite of Baptism:

“You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?”

In desiring baptism in the Church, Catholic parents commit to forming children in the faith. This foundational role is the great gift of parenthood and cannot be filled by any other person or institution. Formation in the faith must include an invitation to relationship with the person of Christ. As parents, we request this sacrament of grace for our children as an external sign of our commitment to raise them in the Catholic faith. However, we must also understand this commitment includes a willingness to prioritize that faith development in our home. It is no surprise that as the culture of family has deteriorated, so too has the transmission of faith within the home.

Living a Catholic life is more than following the moral norms or doctrines of the faith. Rules can never be a solid foundation for a relationship of love. Love is a free choice; loving Christ and His Church must be a decision made in each individual heart. The faith of a child must eventually develop into an adult faith that is deeply desired and freely accepted. As children mature and experience independence, they also develop their own individual free will and take on the decision to know or reject Jesus. In prioritizing faith in the home as a part of the family culture, we invest in the souls of our kids and model the life God intends for each of us. A Catholic home illuminates life's deep meaning within the context of grace, beauty and truth. Living our faith is more than dragging the kids to church and jumping through hoops to receive the sacraments. Lived faith means engaging in a deep personal relationship with Jesus and fostering a heart of Christian love for others.

When parents and godparents present a child for baptism, they do so out of desire. But what is it that is truly desired for that child? In reflecting on the grace of the sacrament of Baptism we know that by water and the Holy Spirit that child receives the gift of new life from God, who is love. Just as we feed and dress our children each day, we are also called to:

“Make it your constant care to bring him (her) up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life which God gives him (her) is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in his (her) heart”(Rite of Baptism).

Faith is meant to be an ongoing lesson, a constant priority in the culture of the home. Only as a priority can our Catholic faith be important; otherwise it is relegated to another thing we do that will eventually fade. As parents model prayer and holiness in the home, they encourage their children to develop strong interior lives. Our relationships on earth will eventually end, but our interior lives are eternal.

This interior life gives us the grace to answer the call to nurture the souls of our loved ones and live out evangelization in our homes. As a family group, children and adults fall in multiple stages of spiritual development. We build deep relationships to know each other's hearts, allowing us to meet each other and grow deeper in love with Christ together. God loves us right where we are, and we are called to do the same for each other. His love is patient and gradual, always encouraging us to grow closer to His merciful heart. This patient and gradual love is called the pedagogy of God. We are called to patiently love our family, friends, coworkers – all those that God has put around us in proximity of relationship. In this, we respond to the Great Commission lived out in our time – the work of evangelization in each individual life.

WHAT EVANGELIZATION IS NOT

In our work of evangelization, we are called to love Jesus and live as witnesses to that love. We are not all asked to be scholars in theology or serve as employees of the Church – our value is not found in what we know, but in whom we know – Jesus Christ. We are effective to the degree that we faithfully live what we believe, and that authentic holiness and joy is attractive to others. As stated by Pope Paul VI the “first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life, given over to God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one's neighbor with limitless zeal” (EN, 41). The power of the Church in sharing the Gospel message is as a “living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus ... the witness of sanctity.” (ibid) We are called to witness in our personal relationships to the work of God through the hills and valleys of our lives. This is a call to vulnerability and openness – both with God and others. It is not easy, but we know it to be an essential element in the new evangelization. “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses” (EN, 41).

Catechesis is a specific moment in evangelization. The work of catechesis is focused on the deeper formation of those who have already experienced initial invitation and conversion of heart. Catechesis and evangelization are meant to “integrate and complement each other”, with catechesis being a remarkable element in the process of evangelization (Catechesi Tradendae, 18) Through catechesis, interested persons grow in their understanding of Scripture, Church doctrine and openness to the Holy Spirit's activity in their lives. As they increase in knowledge, there is a further deepening of relationship and an increasingly profound experience of evangelization in growing closer to Christ and His Church. In this respect, formation (or the sharing of information) in the Church should not be offered before

or in the place of introductory evangelization. For an initial seeker, the work of catechesis should focus on the basic message of salvation, the kerygma. In this, we avoid the occasion of presenting the “rules” or doctrine of the faith before a person has had the opportunity to truly fall in love with Christ. Within this profound experience of conversion a soul is given the grace to deeply experience Christ’s love and mercy. These are essential to softening the heart. A conversion of the heart to know, love and serve Christ truly motivates a responsive conversion of the will to follow His commands for our life.

Discipleship is a way of life for those having experienced conversion in Christ’s love. This was lived out in the communal life of Christ’s earliest followers (Acts 2:42-47). Becoming a Christian was not a formal process, but a chosen lifestyle – those that believed learned from others that witnessed to them in word and action. In doing this, they modeled what Jesus had taught them in His three years of ministry. The first disciples were more than students of Christ’s teaching, they were also eyewitnesses to the most intimate details of His earthly life. Christ not only shared His teaching, but also invited them to live every aspect of holiness with Him. This is discipleship – a willingness to intimately share our lives in accompaniment with another person. Our openness to God in our lives creates a place for the Holy Spirit to fill us with grace and

desire. Fortunately, discipleship is lived out in relationship with another person – we are called to be a disciple and then to disciple others. This process of discipleship grew the early Church for centuries, long before we had parish boundaries or RCIA programs.

Accompaniment offers a “guided encounter with the entire Christian life, a journey toward conversion to Christ. It is a school for discipleship that promotes an authentic following of Christ based on the acceptance of one’s baptismal responsibilities, the internalization of the word of God, and the transformation of the whole person to ‘life in Christ’” (National Directory for Catechesis, 29).

Each of us are called to live as disciples of Christ – to model His life of holiness and virtue in whatever vocation, career or geography we find ourselves. For those that have experienced a relationship of discipleship, this means encountering and accompanying others in your home and/or community. If you have not yet experienced discipleship, we invite you to take this to God in prayer. Pay close attention to the desires of your heart and the relationships in your life that God has given as a deliberate means to grow closer to Him. Watch for someone in your life that is modeling holiness and virtue in their relationship with Christ and His Church, and consider asking for their accompaniment in your journey of faith. **Who might the Lord have placed in your life to accompany you? How might the Holy Spirit be calling you to accompany another?**

STAGES OF EVANGELIZATION AND DISCIPLESHIP

Personal relationships develop in stages. Sometimes these stages are achieved gradually and sometimes circumstances influence a rapid change in stages of relationship. In a similar way, we recognize that there are stages in our relationship with Christ. In the following chart, these stages are labeled as thresholds. We recognize the role of evangelization in initiating and deepening the early stages of pre-trust, trust, curiosity, openness and seeking. At the pivotal point of Conversion, individuals freely decide to actively engage in developing their own personal relationships with Christ. Once they have made this vital decision, a person continues to grow as a disciple. Within their vocation, parents are specifically called to serve in the role of disciple-maker for their children. Each one of us is called to grow in holiness and become a spiritual multiplier during our earthly lifetime, through our prayer efforts and/or active engagement. This is the call we receive to be Saints – to choose a life of virtue and holiness that is reflected in each of our relationships.

Looking at the Thresholds of Conversion and Discipleship – where are you? Where would you place the individuals that surround you in your daily life? Do you know personal details of those whose lives you share that would signal their place in this chart? We are all in different places in our faith journeys. We know that there are “good Catholics” in each of these categories. The external motions of faith can mask the absence of an internal personal relationship with Christ.



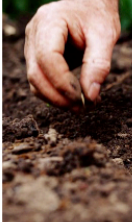

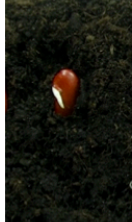






THE THRESHOLDS OF CONVERSION AND DISCIPLESHIP

What do you regularly confess in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Most of us find ourselves repeating the same sins again and again. Recognizing those sinful habits allows us to identify our place in the thresholds of conversion and discipleship. Analyzing our weakest elements leads many of us to realize that we are in the stages of pre-trust and trust. This is not a bad thing – we are all on a journey. We can relate to those who fear trusting God with their weaknesses. It is helpful for each of us to recognize where

we are in our journey as we work to deepen our relationship with Christ. Evangelization calls us to meet people where they are; we are called to love them in that place and offer to accompany them under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to a deeper life in Christ. In order to meet them in their faith journey, we must listen to their story and discern the threshold that best describes their interior desire. This is loving discipleship; to accompany them as they discern growing closer to the heart of Christ.

Forming International Disciples (S. Weddell), Focus Ministeries, Archdiocese of Omaha NE)

The Thresholds of Conversion & Discipleship

										
Pre-Trust A person likely has no connection with an individual Catholic or the Church and likely harbors suspicion or outright hostility toward Catholicism.	Trust A person has a positive association with Jesus, the Church (Catholic schools), or a Catholic. This is <i>not</i> the same as active personal faith.	Curiosity A person is intrigued by or desires to know more about Jesus or his teachings. This is passive interest, and the person is not yet open to change.	Openness A person admits to a general need or desire for personal and spiritual change. This is not the same as a commitment to specific changes.	Seeking A person moves from being passive to actively seeking to know the God who is calling him/her. The seeker is engaged in a spiritual quest.	Decision The decision, in faith, to follow Jesus as an obedient disciple in the midst of the Church, which brings about new life.	Beginning Disciple A person begins to follow Jesus as a disciple, starts turning away from sin, and has a tangible desire to grow spiritually.	Growing Disciple A person develops a heart for God, makes any sacrifice in order to <i>personally</i> grow, and lives habits of the Christian life.	Commissioned Disciple A person has decided to personally answer the call to take part in the mission of the Church by sharing the Good News.	Disciple-Maker A person has helped another to commit their life to Jesus as a disciple and makes any sacrifice to help <i>another person</i> to grow spiritually.	Spiritual Multiplier A person is fully equipped for lifelong Catholic mission and has produced a strong 3rd generation of disciples.

**Passive
Disposition**

Increasing in:
Trust in the Lord
Love
Relationship with Jesus
Activity/personal initiative
Involvement in the community

**Active
Disposition**

The following Forming Missionary Disciples diagram (created by Sean Allen), represents an accompaniment relationship. Each of the four arcs of the circle can be viewed from the perspective of either the person accompanying or the person being accompanied. The arcs are also defined by the words of Christ in His Gospel call to each of us in our varying stages of discipleship.

As the person accompanying another, we are called to:

- **WITNESS:** Live the Gospel through our prayer and actions
- **PROCLAIM:** Share the Gospel with the hope of encouraging openness to the Holy Spirit's call to conversion
- **INTENTIONAL DECISION** – Support the Personal Conversion of the individual being accompanied as they take the lead in growing closer to Christ
- **MATURE:** Accompany them through discipleship as they grow in their faith
- **SEND:** Following the direction of the Holy Spirit, help guide another in determining God's will in their life while continuing to accompany them on their journey

As the person being accompanied, we experience:

- **Pre-Evangelization:** A growing awareness of another as modeling Gospel living
- **Evangelization:** Experiencing proclamation of the Gospel through shared prayer and Scripture

- **Intentional Decision** – Personal Conversion of heart and taking the lead in growing closer to Christ
- **Discipleship:** Ongoing maturing and deepening of faith
- **Apostleship:** Sent into Mission by the inspiration of God, the work of the Holy Spirit and the support of ongoing community and accompaniment
- Each of these stages calls us to specific action in our work of accompaniment. These actions reflect an individual work, but are also valuable in creating opportunities for engagement in the broader ministry of parish engagement.

“Come and See...” – Initially, we are called to witness to another in pre-evangelization – to share our story of faith in an effort to build a relationship and begin to develop trust. Activities that encourage this initial personal encounter and pique curiosity could include parish sports teams, happy hours, in-home brunch/dinner socials, holiday parties and Theology on Tap offerings.

“Follow Me...” – After recognizing an individual's response of curiosity within our trusted relationship, we may consider moving deeper into evangelization by sharing the kerygma (Gospel message), encouraging a personal encounter with Christ and inviting them to deepen their relationship with God. Activities that enhance this stage of evangelization could include an experience within a seeking community such as Alpha, Christ Life, Cursillo or Christ Renews His Parish.

“Remain United in Me...” – As an individual opens their heart to draw closer to Christ, he/she will begin to wrestle with their response to His call for a personal relationship on a deeper level. This will encourage thoughts of conversion, but can also be an occasion of interior struggle. We must be particularly sensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit in their heart at this stage and respect the importance of their decision to grow closer to Christ. Following a desire for conversion and a growing in personal ownership of faith, we can prayerfully invite them into deeper communion with His Bride the Church. We accompany them through discipleship as they mature in their faith with invitation to prayer, the Sacraments (RCIA), ongoing catechesis and parish community. These areas of engagement offer grace and strength of faith to a newly converted heart. Activities that encourage this stage of maturing include participation in bible studies, praise and worship, adoration, conferences and retreats.

“Go and Make Disciples...” – As we mature in our faith and grow closer to Christ, we prayerfully ask for the Holy Spirit’s inspiration in sharing our faith with others. In this work, we are sent and encourage others to respond to the Holy Spirit’s direction for mission in their lives. In continued discipleship, we urge a prayerful discernment for their specific call to bring others to Christ. Activities that inspire this stage of evangelization include specific trainings and programs offering guidance in discernment, such as Called and Gifted, Forming Intentional Disciples, ministry leadership trainings and evangelization workshops.



Sean Allen, Diocese of Fort Wayne / South Bend IN

TRUST

Trust is an essential ingredient in the loving work of evangelization. As a matter of fact, it is the first step. Pre-trust and trust are the gateways into sharing a personal faith journey. We must build authentic trust in our relationships if we are to effectively witness the faith with our family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. We must listen and know their stories, hopes, hurts and dreams. Trust is the critical foundation in vibrant relationships. Jesus modeled the work of building trust for us in His openness to others. He shared meals with tax-collectors and sinners (Luke 5:29-39). Meeting others where they are requires us to step out of our safe-places and securities. We will be stretched, uncomfortable and uneasy. But this cannot deter our efforts. When we acknowledge the small sufferings we experience and call the Holy Spirit into the uncomfortable places, we will be sustained with grace in our efforts. Jesus came into our chaotic world and continues to sustain each of us with His strength, through the difficulties and challenges we bear in His Name.

When we don't build trust with others, we cannot truly know their story. Without their story we often find ourselves in a place of judgment, which destroys trust. We are told to "judge not, lest you be judged" and "you will be measured by the same measure that you use on others" (Matthew 7:1-3). When we judge we enter into divisive and dangerous actions. Instead, we should work to earn the right to be heard through connection in solidarity and suffering. Too often, people are well aware of what others think of their behavior or actions, but have they felt God's love and mercy through another person?

We are called to avoid judgment and to practice prayerful discernment. Prayerful discernment – guided by the Holy Spirit – aids us in understanding where our family, friends, co-workers and neighbors are on their faith journey. True discernment of another's situation requires careful listening and genuine concern. This helps us recognize how to best accompany those near us while cooperating with the Holy Spirit. Whereas judgment creates barriers, prayerful discernment helps us to build bridges of understanding.

DISTANCE

Social distance keeps us separated from those that Christ desires to know intimately. It is a major obstacle in creating a culture of evangelization. When we eliminate social distance, we come face-to-face with isolated, needy and desperate hearts. We want to break down the barriers that create division and allow hidden places for those that are hurt and suffering. Pope Francis calls us to create churches that can serve as field hospitals "to heal the wounds of the heart, to open doors, to free people, to say that God is good, God forgives all, God is the Father, God is affectionate, God always waits for us" (Pope Francis, Mass Homily, 2015 February 5). A number of shifts in our culture have led to an increasing gulf between churches and the unchurched. The teachings of Jesus come across as increasingly foreign to those outside of our parish cultures. These teachings must be presented in beautiful and attractive ways that inspire seekers. The transcendentals of truth, beauty and goodness shrink social distance in that they appeal to the foundation of every human

heart. These ideals rise above our terrestrial thought to provide experiences that lift us closer to God Himself. (St. Thomas Aquinas, De Veritate Q. 1 A. 1)

We find that social distance can also be reflected through tangible objects. Ethnicity, geography and personal choices made in the areas of clothing, body art, language, and values can expand social distance. These tangibles often become occasions for judgment; with only a glance we decide with whom we agree and support. We are excited to evangelize the people that look like us and think like us; however we are called to serve Christ in every place that He puts us. The unchurched will likely not walk through the doors of our Church. When we wait for seekers to come to us, we place the burden of engagement on their shoulders and create an unfair expectation. In baptism we receive the grace necessary to share our faith. Jesus strengthens and fortifies us for this work. He calls us to model His ministry of mission to the lost. All three years of Jesus' public ministry on earth were spent in active seeking and discipleship. The woman at the well (John 4:4-26), the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) and the feeding of the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21) are examples given to us that demonstrate Jesus' active ministry.

"Let us realize that the Lord has dirtied his hands for each of us. Let us look at the cross, start from there and remember that God became my neighbour in sin and death. He became my neighbour; it all starts from there. And when, out of love of him, we too become neighbours, we become bringers of new life. Not teachers of everyone, not specialists in the sacred, but witnesses of the love that saves" (Pope Francis, Mass Homily, 28 October 2018).

Repeatedly in Scripture, we see that Jesus was intentional in closing the social distance between Himself and His children. Unless it is recognized and confronted, social distance works as a great weapon of Satan. Trust cannot grow in social distance, whereas prejudice, dishonesty and injustice thrive. We shrink social distance by building trust and growing in relationship with those around us. Trusting relationships allow us to know the stories behind the faces, and to share the witness of our story with Christ. As we develop lives of cercania (nearness), we shrink the social distance that exists to reveal the truth of God's dignity in each person and His desire to know their heart.

In the New Testament, God established an early theology of geography among Christians. Simply put, God addressed the communities of Christians by the city in which they lived (e.g. Church of Thessalonica, Church of Galatia, Church of Antioch). God instructed them to witness their faith in caring for each other. He told them that others would see this and know them to be disciples "if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Jesus' clear instructions on the two greatest commandments direct us to "love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22: 37) as well as to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22: 39). These are clear marching orders from the mouth of our Lord about the mission of His Church. In moving through maintenance into deeper mission, we are called to dive into this calling as individuals, organizations and parish communities.

What if the Church? (a local collaboration of Christian churches) poses the question, **“Is your Church more introverted or extroverted?”** This is an especially provocative question for Catholic Christians in that our Mass and Sacraments are designed to serve the body of believers. However, scripture reminds us that “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world.” (James 1:27) We are filled with God’s grace in the liturgy and sacraments so that we can serve others as Christ calls us in His mission. As a Church, we are both introverted and extroverted. We are instructed to serve, but not be stained by this world. **What is the balance between the two in your parish or organization?**

In utilizing the prayer-care-share approach (explained below) we are able to focus our first efforts on asking God the fundamental questions of to whom, how and when we should be reaching out. In this work, we know that God cannot ignore our request. We are told that “everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds” (Matthew 7:8). **The prayer-care-share approach relies on God to guide us, as individuals and as parishes/ organizations, through the on-going discernment of our direction and approach to evangelization.**

PRAYER - CARE - SHARE

The tested approach of prayer-care-share offers a tremendous tool for our Archdiocese in building a culture of evangelization, strengthening marriages & families and bringing the light of Christ to our communities.

The prayer-care-share method has been utilized in Christian and Catholic circles and has created waves of evangelical zeal throughout the world.

Prayer is the most powerful tool in the world. All power and goodness flows out of God – this is called primacy of grace. The work of the Holy Spirit in each person’s heart is the first act of evangelization; our efforts to support this work are always secondary. In the prayer-care-share model, we ask God (through prayer) for direction toward “whom” He desires for our investment of time, nurturing and discipleship. It should be noted that sacramental relationships, like that of spouses, parents and priests, require a place of priority for our nurturing. Husbands and wives are sacramentally bound to care for each other’s souls. Parents who have baptized their children are accountable to God for the promises they make in cultivating the spiritual formation of their children. Priests, by nature of their ordination and code of canon law, are responsible to shepherd their flock. In addition to those primary relationships, we may also be called to reach out to our extended family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. Our prayers for the “whom” allows us to be open to collaborating with God in this moment of salvation history.

In addition to praying for the “whom”, we prayerfully trust that God will orchestrate the “how” and “what to say and do”. It is frequently said that timing is everything; it is no different in evangelization. In praying for the “what to say and do”, along with the “when”, we are literally guided through the tangled and confusing decisions of our close relationships by God Himself.

Even our best thinking about timing and action absent of God’s assistance often leaves a wake of division and regret. Prayerful focus on trusting God’s role has been called praying for a “divine appointment.” Whenever we let God guide the “whom, what (to say & do) and when” our relationships will grow stronger. Even if we are not successful by our standards, we know that trusting His guidance and following His Will is our primary task. God cares deeply about our close relationships and wants to guide us through difficult subjects and touchy issues.

When God guides the “whom, what (to say & do) and when”; we must be patient and truly listen to both Christ and our loved ones. We are called to resist the urge to preach or fall into rhetorical speeches. Our authentic relationships demand a genuine witness of love. We are sharing with individuals that are looking for heavenly wisdom and sincere accompaniment, not a propositional or transactional lecture. God will give us the right words at the perfect time, but He desires to play a role in sharing our faith. He waits for us to invite Him to be Lord of our lives, and trust in His plan to motivate our actions.

Care is an outward sign of our internal disposition. In the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) we are given a model of caring for the vulnerable. A nurturing heart builds trust through care—all key ingredients in relationships. The Good Samaritan reflects a care that transcends belief barriers; likewise we are called to care on the basis of human dignity. This can take many forms, sometimes concentrated on the needs of the body (as witnessed by the Good Samaritan) and other times it can simply be recognizing the need for an attentive ear. Listening is fundamental to caring. We often feel we know how to care for others, but we must prayerfully discern the best way to care for each individual. Sometimes, with the best intentions, we can “care” for people (spouses, children, parents, siblings, neighbors, parishioners) in ways that actually frustrate and cause division. Listening brings us to an understanding of others, allowing us to more clearly see how to care for them in a way that builds trusting relationships.

We listen, nurture and care because God is love. We love because we desire to be loved. Pope Francis tells us that the “transmission of the faith, the heart of the Church’s mission, comes about by the infectiousness of love, where joy and enthusiasm become the expression of a newfound meaning and fulfillment in life.” (Message for World Mission Day, 20 May 2018, Solemnity of Pentecost). In loving others, we grow closer to them and to Christ. Listening and nurturing the relationships with our spouse, children, co-workers, friends and neighbors builds understanding. This connection develops intimacy with each other and with God. We do not love, care or listen because we want to evangelize – **people are not projects**. We love because God first loved us (1 John 4:19). Authentic love, nurture and care are parts of a universal language that softens hearts and recognizes human dignity.



SHARE IS A WONDERFUL STAGE IN RELATIONSHIP BUILDING.

In sharing, we exchange stories – often deep and engaging accounts of events in our life. Having prayed for direction, God paves our way for deep personal sharing. At this stage, trust is palpable and our Christianity seeps into our activities. We share stories, challenges and triumphs that reflect the mountains and valleys of our lives. This is not about convincing someone to believe what you know, but likely includes your witness to God’s presence in your life. Sharing may include offering to teach someone to pray, if that is a desire they reveal to you. It may consist of sharing Scripture, if they want to know God’s stories and promises in the Word. It may mean introducing them to others, if community is a deep need in their life.

*“We cannot choose between doctrine
and activism.”*

–Pope Francis

People come to God through other people.

PRAYER, CARE, AND SHARE



We are called to carry out God’s work in God’s own way: in closeness, by cleaving to him, in communion with one another, alongside our brothers and sisters” (Pope Francis, Mass Homily, 28 October 2018). Our openness to follow the direction of the Holy Spirit acting through us is strengthened by our willingness to truly serve another. In openly sharing with others, we reflect the intimacy that Christ has in our life and desires with them as well. This type of sharing is deeply human, and although it requires some vulnerability, it should be an occasion that strengthens relationships and trust. As Catholics, we have much to share about our faith, however we must act in response to another’s desire, usually a bit at a time. Too much sharing with an uninterested heart will feel like a sales call to another person. It is easy to get overexcited and want to share everything you know at one time. It is imperative to remember that even when trust exists and we perceive another’s openness, we must not storm the village. Openness can quickly revert to pre-trust or a closed heart; we must be sensitive to pressuring or overwhelming a relationship. *One key practice that mental health professionals use in effective listening is to answer only the question that the other asks.* If we listen well, we will hear the specific desires of their heart.

We can gently answer questions, in the loving way that Jesus modeled, and wait for more questions to follow.

Within this relationship, God has placed you in a sacred position. We must be as patient with another soul as God has been with ours. Our grace-filled interactions must reflect the mercy and compassion of Christ.

This tender and patient approach models the pedagogy of God – the art of teaching within a relationship of trust. This pedagogy of God is both art and science; it is a process that is patient, gradual and progressive. It has the capacity of a mother’s patience and long suffering for her children, while also reflecting the faithful understanding that all conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The method of prayer-care-share works in individual relationships, as well as in families, communities, organizations and cities. Praying for our communities and caring for their members and leaders builds trusting relationships. Sharing stories, testimonies and time together builds community and creates conversion-friendly environments. It is a virtuous effort to pray as a parish for city managers, government officials, and community leaders in businesses, schools and churches. This recognizes the place of our Church in a greater community and offers our most powerful tool of prayer in supporting those in positions of influence. Our prayer also paves the way for the Holy Spirit to surface the “whom, what (to do and say), and when” in our relationships with these leaders. Listening and being attentive to the pain of our city is a tremendous example of intentional care. Modeling genuine care for those suffering around us, with local church and community leaders, will open hearts and minds within our Church and parish geography.



Enflame Our
**HEARTS
HOMES
COMMUNITIES**

REPENTANCE AND REVIVAL

Have we failed in continuing the mission of the Church through focused efforts at our parishes? Do we need to repent for allowing our parish's energy and resources to become overly focused on maintenance? Our repentance for veering off course opens our hearts to God's grace in steering us back on the path of mission. In repenting, we create an opportunity for revival in our parishes. Historically, the necessary elements for revival have been deep prayer, reading of Scripture, and repentance within an intimate community during a time of desperation (O'Brian). As Catholics, we are challenged to draw together in deep prayer, shared Scripture and communal repentance for a loss of focus in our work. This prepares our hearts for the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit available to us in our mission. Repentance fuels revival. As you prepare to launch Enflame Our Hearts, Homes and Communities in 2020, consider how repentance – as individuals, organizations, and parishes – might fuel revival in your heart and community.

KERYGMA

How might you share the Good News with another person using your own words?

Can you, as Scripture asks, “give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope”? (1 Peter 3:15) Our ability to share the Gospel message is vital in equipping ourselves to be missionary disciples. This initial proclamation of the essential elements of the Gospel is called the kerygma. This is not an apologetic appeal to catechize, but an introduction to God's love as expressed in His Good News with an initial invitation to conversion. These teachings point to critical events in salvation history, concluding with our call to be faithful

Catholic witnesses. Each of us needs to be able to explain this kerygma in an easy, comfortable way. Basic points of the kerygma include:

1. God made the world and humanity for goodness, intending for us to be in communion with Him in peace and love.
2. The disobedience of Adam and Eve brought evil into the world, creating a state of disharmony and disrupting our communion with God and others. Humanity fell into the darkness of sin bringing chaos into our lives.
3. Recognizing our weakness, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to redeem our sin by dying on the cross and restoring us as children of God. Christ's resurrection opened the gates of heaven and defeated death.
4. God sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts and invites us to share in sacramental communion with Him through Scripture and Eucharist in the Catholic Church.
5. Each one of us is invited to share in this intimate and sacramental communion through conversion. We are called to relationship with Christ and His Church as the next step in His plan for salvation.

In the majestic language of the Church, we find the kerygma stated in the prologue of the Catechism:

“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time

and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life.

So that this call should resound throughout the world, Christ sent forth the apostles he had chosen, commissioning them to proclaim the gospel: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age”* (Mt 28:19-20). Strengthened by this mission, the apostles *“went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it”* (Mk 16:20).

Those who with God’s help have welcomed Christ’s call and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world. This treasure, received from the apostles, has been faithfully guarded by their successors. All Christ’s faithful are called to hand it on from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer (Acts 2:42).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church)

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

This guide was designed to offer vision for individual Catholics and parishes of our Archdiocese in sharing the blessing of intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church. We are all built to be in conversation with our Creator, our God. When we neglect our daily conversations with Christ, rarely read or pray with Scripture and disengage from frequent reception of the sacraments we miss out on the gifts of grace and joy that God intends for a faith-filled life. Without personal habits of prayer, Scripture and sacrament, we cannot experience the fullness of Catholic life. We are called to be more than a smoldering pile of ash, but to be a strong and growing Church, on fire as baptized and confirmed Catholic Christians. And our fire of faith is ablaze in the hunger to know and love each soul we encounter! We are called to live the intensity of our faith by growing closer to Christ and inviting others to know Him in an intimate and personal love. This begins with those that are already closest to our hearts—our families, friends and loved ones. God expects us to not only create an earthly legacy with our children and families, but to live as a beacon on a hill and create an eternal legacy as well. In this we fulfill the call of our baptism and achieve the joy of a life lived in striving for holiness and virtue.

The ideas, concepts and information offered in this guide only scratch the surface of what the Church knows and teaches about evangelization. There is a wealth of wisdom and Tradition to be learned in studying Catholic teaching on evangelization, catechesis, discipleship and prayer. Suggested additional resources follow this section. Please refer to the online Evangelization Hardware Store for additional tools and information. We depend on your input in offering the

most relevant resources available at the EHS. Please share materials with us that you have found helpful and would like to see included. Both your individual and parish plans should utilize a number of resources (the most important of which is prayer). Your personal prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit are the keys to success. Through them, God will do great things with your work!

AS YOU REFLECT

Please consider the following for yourself and in your relationships with others:

- What has God said to you in prayer? (about current issues or decisions?)
- **Am I missing divine appointments by not tuning into God's daily plan for my life?** Our loved ones need for us to make those appointments, and God uses our presence to bring others closer to His heart. He arranges these opportunities for us to grow closer to our family, loved ones and neighbors. Ask for His guidance and listen to the call on your heart – Christ will show you the way.
- **Read Acts 2:42 and reflect on how community was built and thrived.** How might Acts 2:42 inform your personal and parish evangelization plan.
- If you were not raised to know Jesus, or do not have an intimate relationship with Jesus, please know that He longs to hold you in the closeness of His Sacred Heart! Christ waits everyday to listen to the longings of your heart offered to Him in your personal prayer. He desires to share tenderness and mercy through Scripture – His Word is written for your heart. There is no barrier too large or sin too great to exclude you, **through the gift of the cross and sacraments**, from the Father you were given as a Child of God. Go to Him in prayer and accept His invitation of love; He longs to be a part of your heart. **God is asking you to let yourself be loved by Him – will you answer yes?**
- *Encountering God* by Dr. Petroc Willey says Catechists do two things. They announce the faith of the Church; and they assist those whom they are catechizing to recognize the presence and work of God in their lives...‘Truly, to help a person encounter God...means to emphasize above all the relationship that the person has with God so that he can make it his own and allow himself to be guided by God’ (GDC 139). **How can you help others recognize the presence and work of God in their lives?**

Dr. Wiley says, *“God is ceaselessly at work, to bring us to himself. The whole of our earthly time is for this, as is all of creation. And yet we do not see. Our eyes are closed.”* Can you turn towards the light, open your eyes and assist others in seeing, too?

Jesus is alive and desires deep relationship with His children. If you experience God’s love, are excited by it and share that opportunity with others, then you are evangelizing! The treasure of knowing Christ is meant for every person. You have been called in a special way to give witness to His love and to walk others into that love. Parishes are encouraged to prioritize individual encounter, serving as safe places for building identity and genuine belonging. They serve as a sacramental oasis to tired souls as they journey through the desert of secular culture. Parish communities must strive to be magnetic and holy places of vibrant community for those seeking Christ! Through God’s will and the power of the Holy Spirit, may each of us be renewed as missionary disciples, in sharing our personal relationship with Christ and building up His Catholic Church in northeast Kansas.

HOW TO: GROUP FACILITATION GUIDE

Created for successful implementation of regional Archdiocese convocations

Great facilitators are crucial to any group work experience. A strong small group facilitator can make or break an attendee experience, so it is important to choose the right people and ensure your facilitators feel prepared to lead the conversation. We recommend creating a facilitators guide with these key tips as well as the specific content with timing for each section of the conversation.

How do you choose a great facilitator? The best facilitators are not always the most vocal or most outspoken members of your parish. Is there someone in your parish that not only asks engaging questions, but is also an excellent listener? Is there someone you can think of that is comfortable addressing conflict and open-minded to other viewpoints? Consider those questions when identifying the best facilitators for your convocation.

Tips for Strong Group Facilitation:

- **Create the right environment**

- See “How to: Create a welcoming environment.”

- **Ensure the expected outcomes and objectives are clear**

- For example, “We are going to start with some deep questions [activity] to help build trust quickly within our group [objective or desired outcome].”

- Provide participants with a clear agenda so they know when to expect breaks, meals, etc.



- **Manage participation**

- You will likely have both introverts and extroverts within your group. Make sure to honor both communication styles. If you are noticing one voice dominating the conversation, thank them for their contributions and then ask if anyone else in the group has something to contribute.

- **Recognize and demonstrate supportive behaviors and responses**

- Recognition, acknowledgement and summarization of contributions allows for group members to build off of each others comments and suggestions more easily.

- For example, “I hear you saying that a consistent focus on praying before every meal has helped strengthen your family unit, has anyone else experienced something similar or have a thought that correlates to that?”

- **Be comfortable with silence**

- Once you have posed a question, don't be afraid of the silence that may follow. Silence allows for people to think before responding.

- Pro tip: If silence makes you uncomfortable, count to ten before jumping in and saying anything.

- **Don't be scared of conflict**

- Conflict can make conversation meaningful and lead to better and more impactful solutions.

- Pro tip: When conflict comes up in conversation, frame it for the group as a disagreement with the statement not the person.

- **Provide closure**

- As the facilitator, part of your role is to show gratitude, summarize and close the conversation so your group leaves knowing what they accomplished and feeling good about the time spent.

- For example, “Thank you to each of you for your contributions [show gratitude]. In our discussion today we were able to identify new ways to further strengthen our family units [summarize what we accomplished]. We will be distributing a recap of the strategies in a post convocation recap booklet [what now?].”

HOW TO: CREATE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

*Created for successful implementation of regional
Archdiocese convocations*

Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment greatly affects the learning experience of your convocation attendees. The best learning and growth comes when attendees feel at ease in the space around them and can truly focus on the content. This allows for maximum vulnerability, collaboration, and comfort for all. Use these tips to ensure your convocation environment promotes the best possible experience.

- **Consider your host location**

- Host the gathering in a warm, welcoming place.
- Consider the warmth of the parish or comfort of your own home.

- **Consider inclusivity in your environment design**

- Ask yourself: will everyone be able to enjoy the environment in the same way?
- Consider all of the ways people will engage with the environment: touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste.
- Things to look for:
 - Are the chairs or seats far enough apart that a wheelchair or walker could get through?
 - Ensure a variety of seating for comfort for all body shapes and sizes.
 - Be considerate of those hard of hearing. Consider reserving seats at the front for those individuals.
 - When applicable, provide translators for Non-English speakers.



- **Make safe and quiet spaces readily available for those who may need it**

- Consider a sign at registration that says, “Need a quiet space or a mother’s room? Please ask a member of our team.”

- **Create a warm welcome**

- Consider positioning volunteers at the front doors to greet attendees as they come in.

- Ensure your volunteers at the registration desk are prepared to answer questions and give information as needed.

- **Open the small group discussions with meaningful questions to build trust quickly**

- See: “Meaningful Questions that Build Trust” in the resource section.

- **Create opportunities for people to connect on a deeper level if desired**

- Consider incorporating one-on-one coffee pairings or one-on-one lunch pairings at the beginning of the convocation.

HOW TO: SOURCE A SPEAKER

Created for successful implementation of regional Archdiocese convocations

Getting the right speaker for your gathering can make or break an experience. Someone might be dynamic at a party and a great storyteller, but may not be the right choice to speak to a larger group in a more formal setting. So how do you choose who to target for your convening? Look beyond personality to characteristics that will be good for your specific need: Can they think about objective, audience and message and be willing to work within these constraints?

If you could get anyone that you wanted, who would it be? What characteristics do they have that make them a desired speaker for this gathering? Now, who do you know that shares one or two similar qualities? Now we're on the right path - Use the below tips and step by step guide to help you identify a small list of targets that will help make your convening a success.

- **Look within your network**

- Before looking to external sources to find your speaker, consider those tied to your parish.
- Stronger connections to the message usually come from speakers with a personal tie to the audience.

- **Consider your topic**

- Is there an individual with a strong tie to this topic?
- Consider someone who not only has an understanding of the topic but also a passion for the message.

- **Consider your audience**

- Are there individuals within your parish who would be good for this topic?
- Will this person make the audience feel welcome, represented and understood?
- Consider surveying your parish for speaker volunteers/nominations.

- **Characteristics of a great presenter**

- **Dynamic** - the speaker should be engaging with their tone and personality.
- **Clear** - do they have the ability to state their message simply and clearly?
- **Commanding** - will the speaker own the room?
- **Credible** - do they have established rapport with the audience? If not, how can they build that trust at the beginning of their session?
- **Passionate** - do they have a passion for the overarching message of evangelization? Are they passionate about their specific topic?

- **Stumped?**

- Reach out to Emily Lopez (elopez@archkck.org) on the Archdiocese team for guidance.

Sourcing a Speaker: Step by Step Guide



List those within your network who share the above characteristics:

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |



Who can relate best to the audience?

- | |
|----------|
| 1. _____ |
| 2. _____ |

Once your speaker is selected, spend time with them. Pray with them, take them to coffee to discuss the topic, and create a presentation outline.

STEP If you could have any speaker, who would it be?

01 _____

What about this individual makes them your top choice?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP

02



Among those people, who is the most equipped to speak towards this specific topic?

STEP

03

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP

04



STEP Who is available and willing?

05 _____

STEP

06

PART 6

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

MEANINGFUL QUESTIONS - THAT BUILD TRUST QUICKLY

Created for successful implementation of regional Archdiocese convocations

Powerful questions are key to building trust quickly within small groups. Powerful questions force people outside of their comfort zones, require them to dig deep and engage fully, and create a sense of trust and belonging amongst others. Consider the qualities and examples of great questions when creating small group content for your convocation.

Qualities of a great question:

- It's ambiguous - "This requires each person to bring their own, individual meaning to the room."
- It's personal - "All passion, commitment and connection grow out of things that are personal."
- It evokes anxiety - "All that matters makes us anxious"

Powerful questions:

- What is the commitment you hold that you brought into this room today?
- Why was it important for you to show up today?
- What is the price you or others pay for being here today?
- How valuable do you plan for this effort to be?

Convocation 2019 Questions

- Turn to the person next to you and ask for prayer - we all have things going on in our lives where we need someone to pray for us - share that with your neighbor and pray together. Invite the Holy Spirit to impact your neighbors' life and your own.
- What was a time in your life when you went through a difficult period that tested you and/or your faith, and when you look at it now you are surprised by the realization of blessings that you received? Spend 3-4 minutes explaining the difficult period and the remainder of the time sharing the realization of the blessing that you have received.
- How does listening impact the way you care for your 3, your 12?

We've talked about what you're going to do for your 3 and your 12, but what about that person whose name weighs on your heart but hasn't made it on your list...

- *On one of the sticky notes on your table - we want you to write the name of a person in your life that you have been avoiding getting to know. Talk with your partner -*
 - *Why have you been avoiding it?*
 - *How does this make you feel?*
 - *Who is it hard to love?*
 - *Who seems too far out of reach?*

(Block, Peter)

SOME BEST PRACTICES TO KEEP IN MIND:

- Videos should be used to supplement, not as the main method of communication. We are creating first generation encounters.
- Intentionally plan prayer opportunities for participants
- Look within your Parish for speakers and teachers
- Do not intentionally alienate people
 - Build bridges through both tradition and contemporary
- Remind people of their role as a Missionary Disciple
- Have an appointed leader and delegation facilitator
- Appoint a story gatherer for your convocation. Engage with participants, gather their stories and report these back to the Archdiocese to share within the community.

GREAT SHORT READS

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Cotter, Kevin. *Called: Becoming an Everyday Disciple in a Post-Christian World—A Five-Week Guide*. Ave Maria Press. Notre Dame, IN 2018

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GREAT LONGER READS

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KEY DOCUMENTS

General Directory for Catechesis
ISBN: 978-1-57455-443-4 Product: 5-443 Perfect Bound Paperback USCCB047
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For additional guidance and support in evangelization, please reach out to your pastor or parish priest. Further resources can be found through the Archdiocesan Office of Evangelization.

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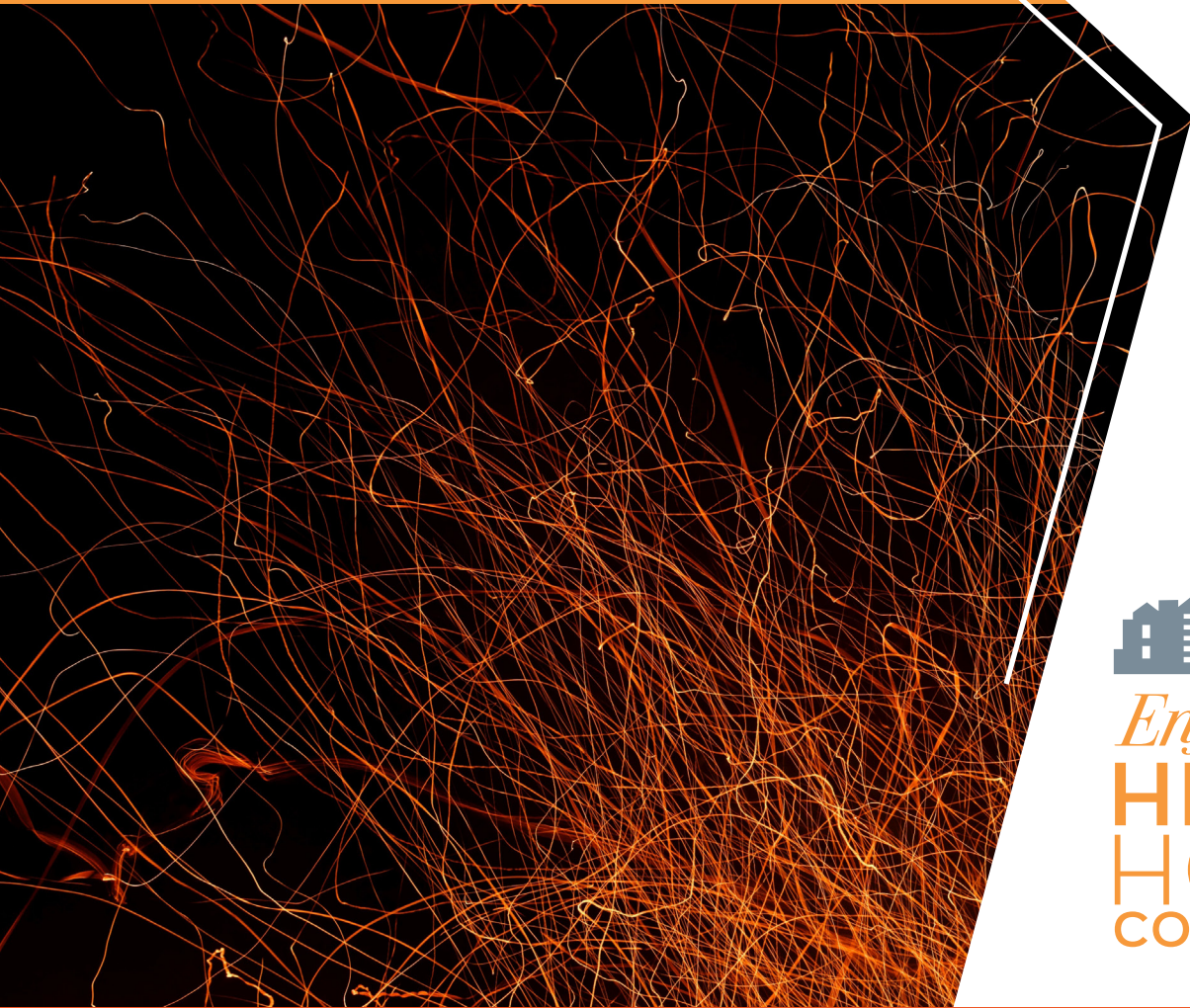
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Sean Allen. *Forming Missionary Disciples* graphic – Diocese of Fort Wayne/South Bend IN. Used by permission.



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Personal Evangelization Plan: Fulfilling the Great Comission by living out the Great Commandment



Crowds to Three

Christ-Modeled Evangelization Using the Prayer-Care-Share Approach

Office of Evangelization, Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas

Understanding Crowds to Three

Baptized Into Mission

The mission of the Church is to share the Gospel. This message of hope, joy and ultimate love is an invitation to know Jesus through His Sacramental Church. Jesus models how the Gospel is shared through relationships of discipleship. His method can seem counter-intuitive; He spent most of His time with a small group of people. **His investment in a few changed the world. Our investment in a few has the power to do the same.**

We believe that "...the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold." (Matthew 12:23)

Jesus models evangelization to four distinct groups. He invested most deeply in relationships with 12 and 3. He gave the majority of His time in sharing life and prayer with these 12 and 3. This example introduced a specific way of living, especially to his three – Peter, James and John. These three men, modeling the way of Jesus, engaged in deep relationships and served as missionary disciples spreading Christianity to the world.

We are the Church, we are invited to this same mission. Our baptism is a call to a life of discipleship. Through prayer and sacramental grace, we are equipped to intentionally live as a missionary disciple. This resource will help you develop your specific plan for mission. Your unique mission fulfills your call to share the Gospel with the world.

Crowds to Three

HOW DID JESUS EVANGELIZE?

TIME & ENERGY

HOW DO I EVANGELIZE?

JESUS AND THE CROWDS

Reaching the multitudes

World - "Great crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and addressed them..."
Luke 14:25



THE CROWDS AND ME

Reaching the multitudes

Places I could be an example of living a Christian life to the crowds might include my neighborhood, my workplace, or through social media.

JESUS AND THE 72

Engaging committed followers

Disciples - "After this the Lord appointed seventy two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit."
Luke 10:1



72 AND ME

Engaging committed followers

Places I could engage other committed followers of Christ by my word or deed might include parish events, parish organizations, service and outreach projects, formation.

JESUS AND THE 12

Forming a group of disciples

Apostles - "Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them..."
Mathew 10:5



12 AND ME

Forming a group of disciples

Places I could help others become disciples or mature in their discipleship journey might include small faith groups, bible studies, or a lay movement.

JESUS AND THE 3

Intentionally mentoring 3 disciples

Peter, James, and John - "After 6 days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and lead them up a high mountain apart by themselves..."
Mark 9:2



3 AND ME

Intentionally mentoring 3 disciples

Who might God be calling me to personally accompany in spiritual friendship?

Prayer, Care, Share

Becoming More Intentional in Mission & Action

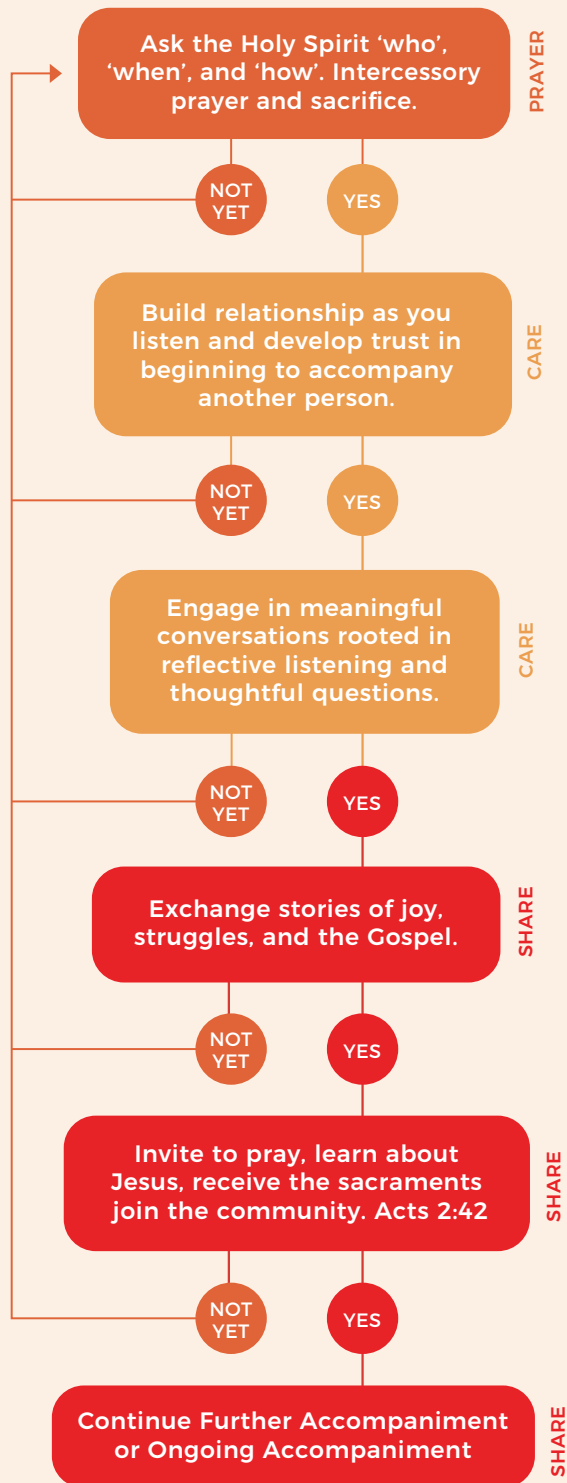
Our individual relationships should reflect the interactions of Jesus. His model of sharing life and encouraging each person to grow closer to the heart of God serves as the example of authentic relational love. This highlights the priority we give to living out our personal apostolate of evangelization. We follow Jesus' example using the Crowds to Three model and practicing prayer, care, share in our relationships. Each of us, as a disciple of Christ, is called to His mission of making disciples.

UNDERSTANDING PRAYER, CARE, SHARE

PRAYER is the first action of evangelization. We root into and receive God's grace when we are connected to Him. Living in relationship with Christ empowers us to bring His love to those we encounter. Through prayer, we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit. This is not easy work! We live in a world of distractions and are offered many good things to do with our time. However, many of these good efforts do not grow our holiness. True holiness is rooted in prayerful abandonment to God's will. Our surrender to Christ allows us to reflect the holy joy of His Love to others. This surrender also encourages divine appointments -- occasions of encounter outside of our control, but fully within God's plan. It is imperative that we are intentionally creating time for prayer in our lives to grow closer to Christ and allow Him to work through us.

CARE is our lived out expression of God's love. It is an overflow of the internal abundance of grace received in our relationship with Christ through prayer and the sacraments. We follow Christ's example of receiving people with love and offering the support they need. Just as we have been received and supported in our spiritual journey, so we do the same for those Christ brings into our lives. Many times, our first action of care is to listen. We cannot know how best to receive and support others unless we know their heart and have gained their trust. Every person has a unique story, we must never accept a label in place of their story. For those who are married and/or have children, these immediate relationships of care take priority. Likewise, priests have a responsibility to nurture the relationships of their flock (parishioners/ brothers) with Jesus.

SHARE is our opportunity to respond in offering our story with others. Sharing our unique journey into deep relationship with Christ and His Church serves as a witness of love. We validate the deepest identity of another as a Child of God when we speak to their heart in love. We trust the primary work of conversion to the Holy Spirit, our human power cannot fully convert the heart to Christ. We cannot be interested in winning the argument or convincing the mind, but focus on serving the heart in genuine friendship. As we share, we will see the opportunity for deeper relationship and feel the call to individual accompaniment. This is the deepest investment of time and energy, and is the specific relationship lived out with your 3. Sharing within accompaniment is very personal and self-reflective. As you accompany individuals, you will have the opportunity to share the Gospel message of Christ's love (Kerygma). Increased awareness of Christ's invitation to respond to that love encourages others to genuinely open their heart. This vulnerability can be very scary and new; your presence in their life offers a strong support and model of lived relationship with God.



Evangelization

Fulfilling the Great Commission by living out the Great Commandment

Jesus has called each one of us to fulfill His mission to share the Gospel. On the road to Emmaus, He gave a clear direction to his followers:

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20)

Each one of us is given the confidence of His Presence in our mission. We connect to Him through prayer and the Sacraments. As our relationship with Jesus is strengthened, we experience His Grace and are enflamed with His Spirit. His Love fills our lives and this love is transmitted as we touch the lives of others:

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.’” (The Great Commandment Matthew 22:36-40).

We fulfill the Great Commission by living out the Great Commandment.

Creating Your Evangelization Plan

Jesus modeled that most of our time and energy in evangelization will be spent with your three, rather than the 12, 72, and crowds. However, He did also model the importance of spending some time and energy witnessing to larger groups. This witness can be simply living as a Catholic Christian. This unique way of living includes a life of prayer, genuinely caring for others and sharing the Gospel message in word and deed.

Praying for our communities and caring for their members builds trusting relationships. Sharing stories and time together builds community and creates conversation-rich environments. Listening allows us to truly understand the joy and pain of others. Authentic listening is a tremendous example of intentional care. Caring in this way open(s) hearts and minds in our home, parish and community.

Using the Prayer, Care, Share model, create your personal evangelization plan. Prayerfully consider what God is calling you towards at this time in your life. Reflect on the individual relationships you have with others in your family and community. Prayer, Care, Share serves to strengthen all of your relationships -- both inside and outside of your home. However, the Crowds to 3 framework applies to those outside of your immediate family. Your vocation requires you to prioritize prayer, care, share in your home above those within your extended community.

Make note of your plan below. Specifically outline your call to pray, care and share with your extended community as they fall into the following four distinct groups. Remember, most of your time and energy (outside of your immediate family) should be given to your 3. If your three are clearly identified, write their names below with details on how you will pray, care and share with each. If you are uncertain of these 3, include your desire to know them in your personal prayer and trust that God will reveal them to you!

CROWDS

72

12

3

1.

2.

3.

Enflame Your Heart

The First & Last Work of Evangelization

In response to the gift of faith that God placed in our hearts, we desire to know, love and serve God in our daily lives. Our strength for the mission of evangelization is found in making time for Scripture, praying intimately and deeply with our Lord, spending time with other disciples, participating in the liturgy and sacraments of the Church, and listening to the Lord as he guides the “whom, what (to say and do) and when” of our divine appointments with others.

Begin by calling upon the Holy Spirit for guidance: Holy Spirit, give me confident faith and a lighthearted reliance upon You. As I surrender myself to you, empower me to touch others with Your love.

Write a response for each question in the following areas:

IN WHAT WAYS MIGHT GOD BE CALLING ME CLOSER TO HIM AND HIS CHURCH THROUGH...?

SCRIPTURE

PRAYER

FELLOWSHIP

SACRAMENTS

DIVINE APPOINTMENTS

HOW AM I ALLOWING THE HOLY SPIRIT TO ENFLAME MY HEART IN THESE AREAS?

SCRIPTURE

PRAYER

FELLOWSHIP

SACRAMENTS

DIVINE APPOINTMENTS

The First & Last Work of Evangelization

“If Jesus has given us the mission to evangelize, then He wants us to have and to experience a lived relationship with Him. Do I give myself permission to want that? Do I give myself permission to embrace Jesus’ desire to have that relationship with me? Do I often tell Jesus that I want to experience his presence and love? The first and last work of evangelization is to long for that more and more.”

- Msgr. Thomas Richter,
Integrated Evangelization

If Jesus has given me the mission to evangelize, then He wants me to develop and experience a real and ongoing relationship with Him.

Do I feel the desire in my heart to want that?

Do I fully recognize and embrace Jesus’ desire to have that relationship with me?

Do I create time and space in my daily life to grow my relationship with Jesus?

Do I share my desire to fully experience His Presence and love with Jesus?

The first and last work of evangelization is to long for more Jesus in our heart.