



# *Enflame Our Hearts*

*Be Disciples, Make Disciples*

CONVOCATION**2019**  
LEADER'S GUIDE

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“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?

*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).

Archbishop Naumann hopes that Convocation 2019, Enflame Our Hearts, will be a valuable tool to better enable parish and other Catholic leaders to carry out the Lord’s commission to make disciples and to build a culture of evangelization in northeast Kansas. It is the Archbishop’s desire that the Convocation will better equip parish and other Church leaders to build 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.

Thank you for accepting the invitation to be on mission in our archdiocese.

You are an important leader with a valuable role to play in this historic chapter of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. The 2019 Convocation, Enflame Our Hearts, will be the precursor to a multi-year initiative beginning in Lent of 2020. This guide will provide direction on preparing for both the CONVOCATION and the subsequent INITIATIVE.

**Please prayerfully review this material to equip yourself as part of the wave of missionary disciples that Archbishop is launching into our homes and communities.**



## 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.

Your pastor (or the leader of your Catholic organization) has recognized you as one of these trailblazers and has invited you to be a delegate for the 2019 Convocation. As a delegate, you have been invited to serve as a key leader in this great work of missionary discipleship.



# What • Where • When

Archbishop Naumann has asked all archdiocesan pastors to convene for a three-day working meeting of key leaders – both clergy and lay – from October 3-5th of 2019 at the Overland Park Convention Center. Archbishop considers this Convocation “to be the most important and significant pastoral event during [his] almost 14 years in the Archdiocese.” The goal of this gathering (and the initiative to follow) is to expand all facets of parish and Catholic life in our archdiocese beyond the demands of maintenance to the challenging adventures of mission. This will be accomplished by activating leaders who serve with “a missionary dynamism which will bring salt and light to the world” (Joy of the Gospel, 81).

*Your role as a delegate is to:*

- **Engage in preparation as directed by your pastor, organization leader and/or Archdiocesan officials**
- **Attend the October 2019 Enflame Our Hearts convocation with your parish/organization delegation**
- **Invest in the continuing work of missionary discipleship in your parish and Catholic community through 2020 and beyond.**

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.

*The Enflame Our Hearts convocation in October 2019 will be an opportunity to gather and focus our archdiocesan community in shared prayer, discovery, planning and purpose.*

This event will be a launching point to a larger parish initiative in 2020. Our hope is for deeper relationships, inspired holiness and active joy in each of our parish communities. This work will concentrate our efforts at the parish level to further encourage encounters with Christ and one another in an effort to enflame hearts, homes and communities with the Joy of the Gospel.

Those that are part of organizational delegations will focus on building a culture of evangelization within their institutions or apostolates. They will also discern how their work can serve to strengthen local parish life and the overall missionary vitality of the Church in northeast Kansas.



## PART 2

### • THE WORK OF OUR CHURCH

*As an individual delegate....*

**PRAY** – Dedicate yourself to intentional growth in personal prayer and the regular reception of sacramental grace. Invoke the Holy Spirit to guide you and your work.

- **Evaluate personal prayer life –**

- o Do I prioritize building my relationship with Christ through daily personal prayer?
- o How can I increase my efforts to know Jesus and His call for my specific work in bringing others to know Him?

- **Evaluate personal sacramental life –**

- o Do I prioritize my relationship with Christ through His Church by regularly receiving the Sacraments?
- o How can I increase my efforts to grow in holiness through His sacramental grace, especially in receiving the Eucharist and Reconciliation?

**STUDY** – Commit to the careful review and consideration of this guide, the Integrated Evangelization booklet, and other materials in preparing for your role as a parish or organization delegate.

- Complete the Bible Engagement Survey, which will be emailed to you and is available on the Convocation website at [www.archkck.org/enflame](http://www.archkck.org/enflame). (American Bible Society)
- Parish delegates should evaluate MissionInsite data for the demographics of your parish community in order to assess and understand your mission audience. Other delegates should evaluate the MissionInsite data to determine your organization's sphere of influence. (Note: The Archdiocese has a contract with MissionInsite to provide demographic data and trends. The Archdiocesan Office of Mission Strategy will provide reports from MissionInsite and help delegations interpret the reports.)
- Based on the demographics, consider ways to shrink the social distance (p.41) between the people you serve and the Church.
- Research the current and past efforts in evangelization at your parish/organization.
- Research the efforts in evangelization done at other parishes/organizations, specifically looking for success stories.
- Reflect on experiences of evangelization that have impacted your life –
  - o Who initially introduced you to Jesus?
  - o How were you invited to deepen your relationship with Christ and His Church?
  - o What made this an effective and meaningful experience for you?

**PLAN** – Based on your individual discernment, develop a personal plan for evangelization (or refine an existing plan) using the provided template. Be prepared to share this plan at the 2019 Convocation.

- Engage in regularly reading Scripture (e.g. Lectio Divina) and regular reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, especially during Lent 2019. (This will be a suggested action for all parishes and organizations during Lent 2020.)
- Prayerfully consider what person(s) in your life God may be calling you to spiritually accompany.
- Utilize the system of “prayer–care–share” (p.43) to build stronger relationships within your family and your home.

*As a delegation team....*

**PRAY** – Through earnest prayer, seek divine guidance on how to best build a culture of evangelization at your parish/organization. Publicly invoke the Holy Spirit to guide your team and engage your parish's/organization's “prayer warriors” in supporting the efforts of your delegation.

- Offer opportunities for Reconciliation to team members just before and/or after delegation meetings.
- Use Scripture-based reflection and prayer to begin your meetings (e.g. Lectio Divina).
- Consider attending a regional retreat (offered by the Archdiocesan Evangelization Office) or providing your own retreat for parish/organization delegates.
- Reflect on the unique nature of your parish/organization, including history, strengths and successes that highlight your specific, God-given mission.
- Prayerfully evaluate the tools offered in the Evangelization Hardware Store for their value to your parish/organization in enflaming hearts, homes and communities.

**STUDY** – Commit to group reflection and discussion of this guide, the Integrated Evangelization booklet, and other materials in preparing your delegation.

- Communicate individual delegate's findings and insights from MissionInsite data to evaluate and understand your mission audience.
- Consider how your parish can offer opportunities to shrink the social distance (p.41) between the Church and the people in your local community.
- Evaluate the current and past efforts in evangelization at your parish/organization.
- Discuss efforts in evangelization at other parishes/organizations, specifically looking at methods that are successful in offering experiences for encounter and accompaniment within the community (p.12).
- Assess the benchmarks of evangelization – prayer, planning, hospitality and culture – in your parish/organization community.
- Share individual experiences of successful evangelization, focusing on initial invitation, shared encounters and ongoing accompaniment.

**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

The goal of this Convocation (and subsequent pastoral initiatives) is for parishioners to experience how a culture of evangelization develops when hearts are on fire with love for Jesus. 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.

*(The Archdiocesan Evangelization Office offers the following suggestions for delegations to consider as options for use in developing parish/organization plans for building a culture of evangelization.)*



*In 2016, Archbishop Naumann established parish evangelization benchmarks to aid leaders in assessing efforts at their parish.* Archbishop shares these benchmarks in his parish visits as measurements of evangelical zeal. These benchmarks are Prayer, Planning, Hospitality and Culture.

*Approaching Advent of 2020*, consider sharing the Prayer-Care-Share approach (p.43) with your parish community to strengthen marriages and families. Encourage participation in some component of the Joyful Marriage Project.

These suggestions have been effectively used and have been shown to bear fruit. However, each delegation will need to discern which methods work best for their specific situation and the appropriate timing for implementing plan elements in order to best serve their mission.

The suggestions above provide ideas as a starting place for 2020. In the years 2021-2024, delegations may choose to repeat suggested approaches, further refine these approaches or try new methods. Some delegations may choose an alternative approach from the Evangelization Hardware Store (available on the Enflame website) or your own research. The Archdiocesan Office of Evangelization serves to support parish/organization efforts in implementing methods to enflame hearts, homes and communities.

## *Suggested Activities or Elements of an Evangelization Plan:*

As a delegation, consider developing a plan to engage your parish or organization in the prayerful reading of Scripture (e.g. Lectio Divina) and the regular reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent 2020. This work is a suggested action to enflame the hearts of your leadership and members.

In preparing for Pentecost 2020, consider continuing to pray the Novena to the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen the faithful in the work of the New Evangelization. Look for methods of serving the community through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Options to consider include parish “twinning,” special needs outreach or partnering with Catholic Charities.

- Prayer must always be our first action. In prayer, we deepen our individual relationship with Christ and grow in our understanding of the action He desires from us. At the parish level, all activities and meetings should begin with intentional prayer that invites the Holy Spirit to fill the hearts and work of those gathered.
- Planning is a necessary part of parish life. As a parish focused on evangelization, all parish activities, events and action should also be intentionally focused on this mission of the Church. The Crowds to Three resource (available on the EHS) is a valuable aid in developing opportunities of witness, encounter and accompaniment at your parish.
- Hospitality goes beyond a pleasant Sunday Mass experience; it is an attitude rooted in the desire to care for the sick, broken and vulnerable. As a people of Jesus, we are called to love everyone we meet as a unique child of God. In practicing genuine hospitality, we respond to others with sincere care and concern, focused on offering a loving response from an irresistible Church.
- Culture is created when we concentrate our attention and work on promoting values, principles and beliefs that reflect our faith. The 2019 Convocation and 2020-2024 initiative are focused on building a culture of faith-sharing evangelization in our hearts, homes and parish communities.



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.

### 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 is good at both approaches. However, in today’s ongoing work of evangelization, we see that individuals and parish communities who recognize the need for a holistic approach are experiencing 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.

So many today are surrounded by – and are 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 young people, are desperate to belong to something greater than themselves. They seek truth, beauty and goodness. This 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 loves that His wandering children seek truth, beauty and goodness. This is the compass He has placed in the human heart to direct us back to relationship with Him 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 the 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 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 we have our own in our modern-day Church. 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:

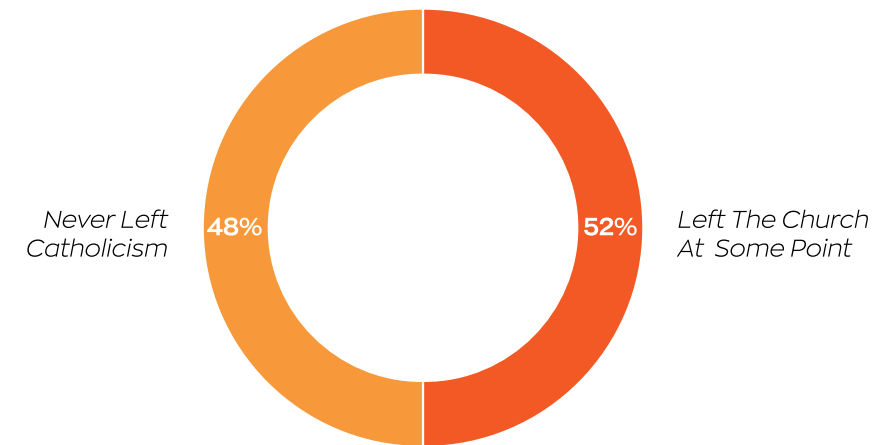
**Catholics and “Nones”** — Catholics make up 20.8% of self-identified religious persons in the United States (including Christians and non-Christians). In comparison, religious “nones” make up 22.8% of the same group. These “nones” include those identifying as “nothing in particular” to be 15.8% of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

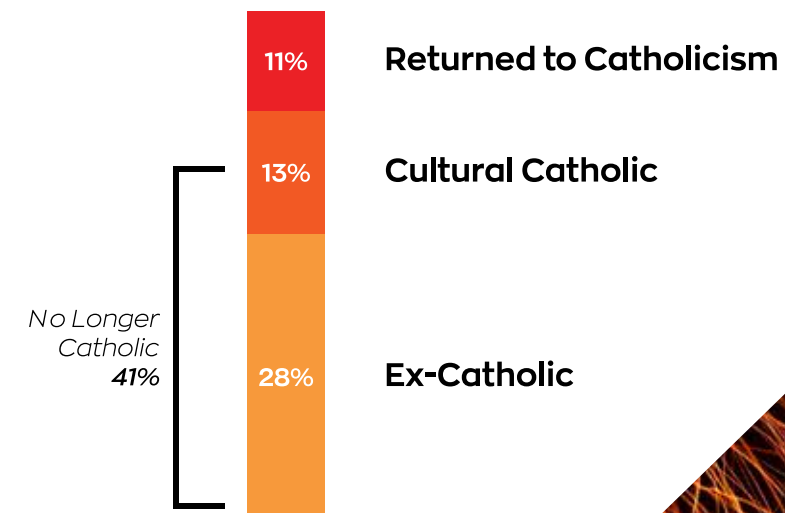
**“Cultural Catholics”** - Additionally, one in ten (9%) of Americans self-identify as “cultural Catholics.” This group cites affiliation based on ancestry, culture and/or beliefs. Some of these “cultural Catholics” nominally engage in faithful activities including attending Mass, receiving the Sacraments 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.

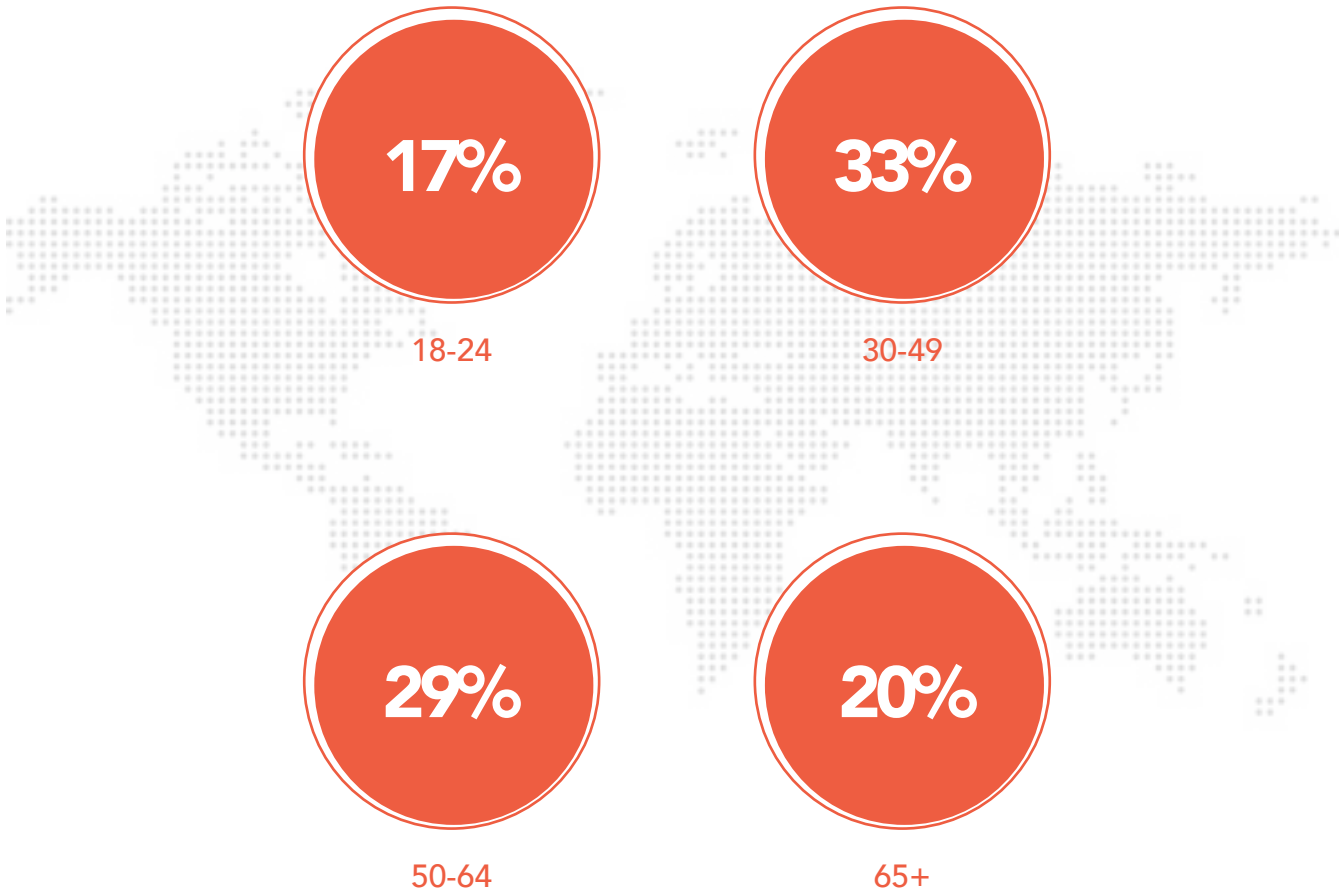
**The 52% who left the Catholic Church include...**



# FAST FACTS

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

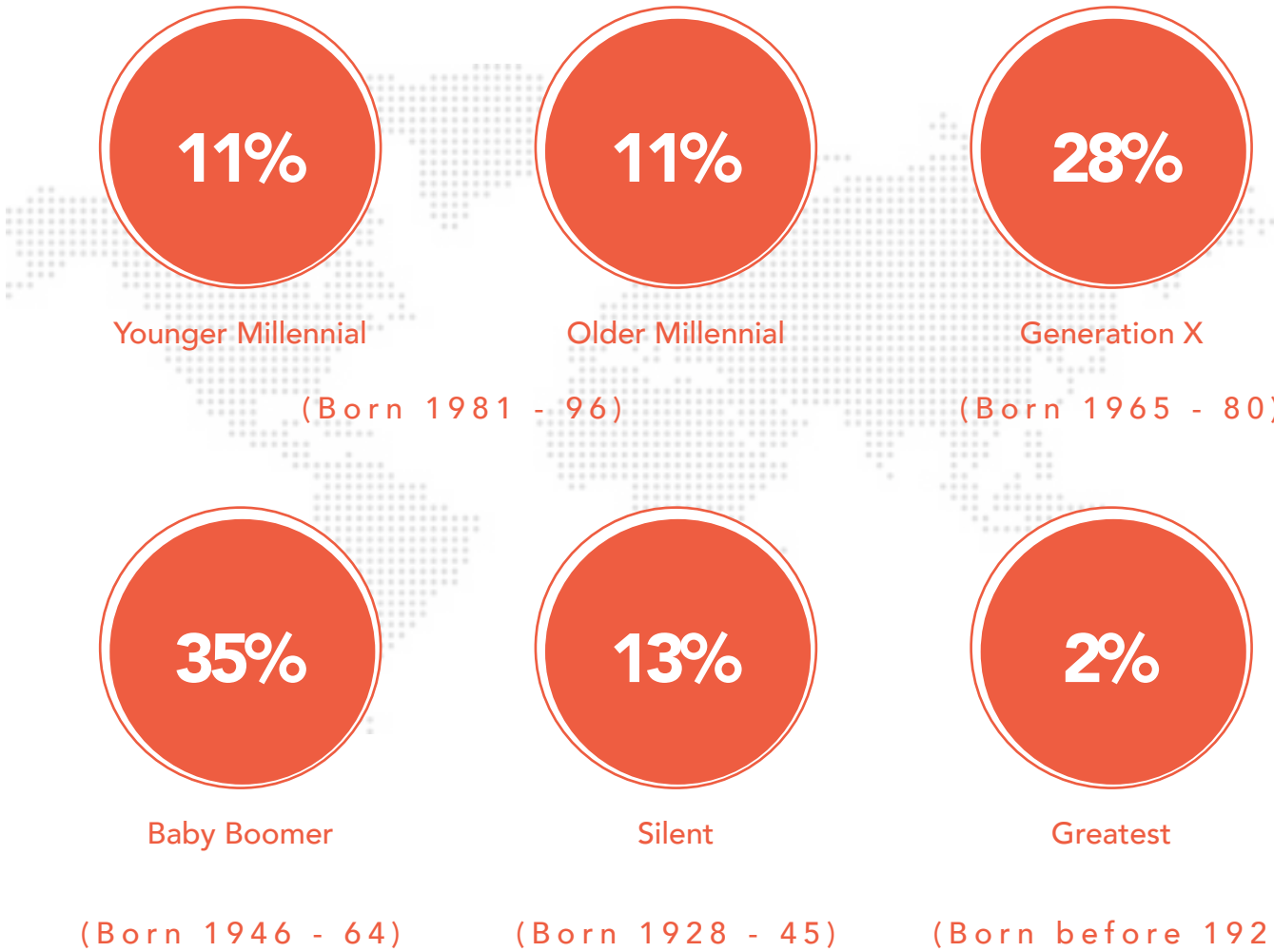
(Pew Research Center, Religion in America: Age Distribution)



# 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](http://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.

As we prepare for the Enflame Our Hearts convocation in October 2019, 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, work to be a blessing in your home and study the preparation materials so that we all might be a greater blessing to our Church and our community.

### 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.



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.

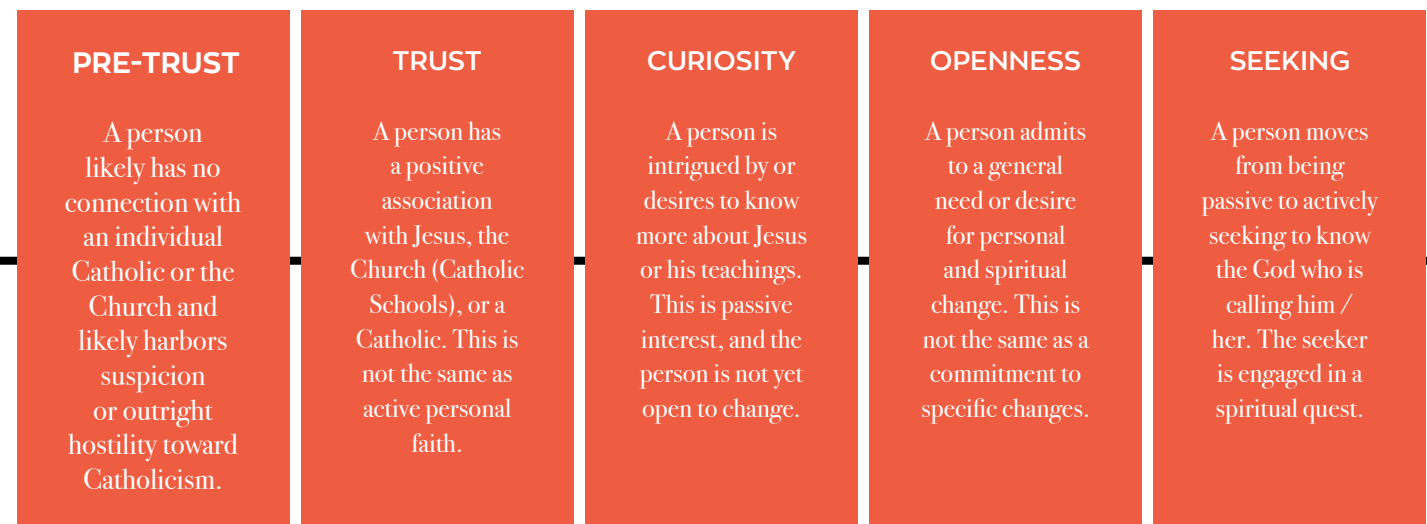
*Accompaniment offers a “guided encounter with the entire Christian life, a journey toward conversion to Christ. It is a school for discipleship that promotes an authentic following of Christ based on the acceptance of one's baptismal responsibilities, the internalization of the word of God, and the 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.



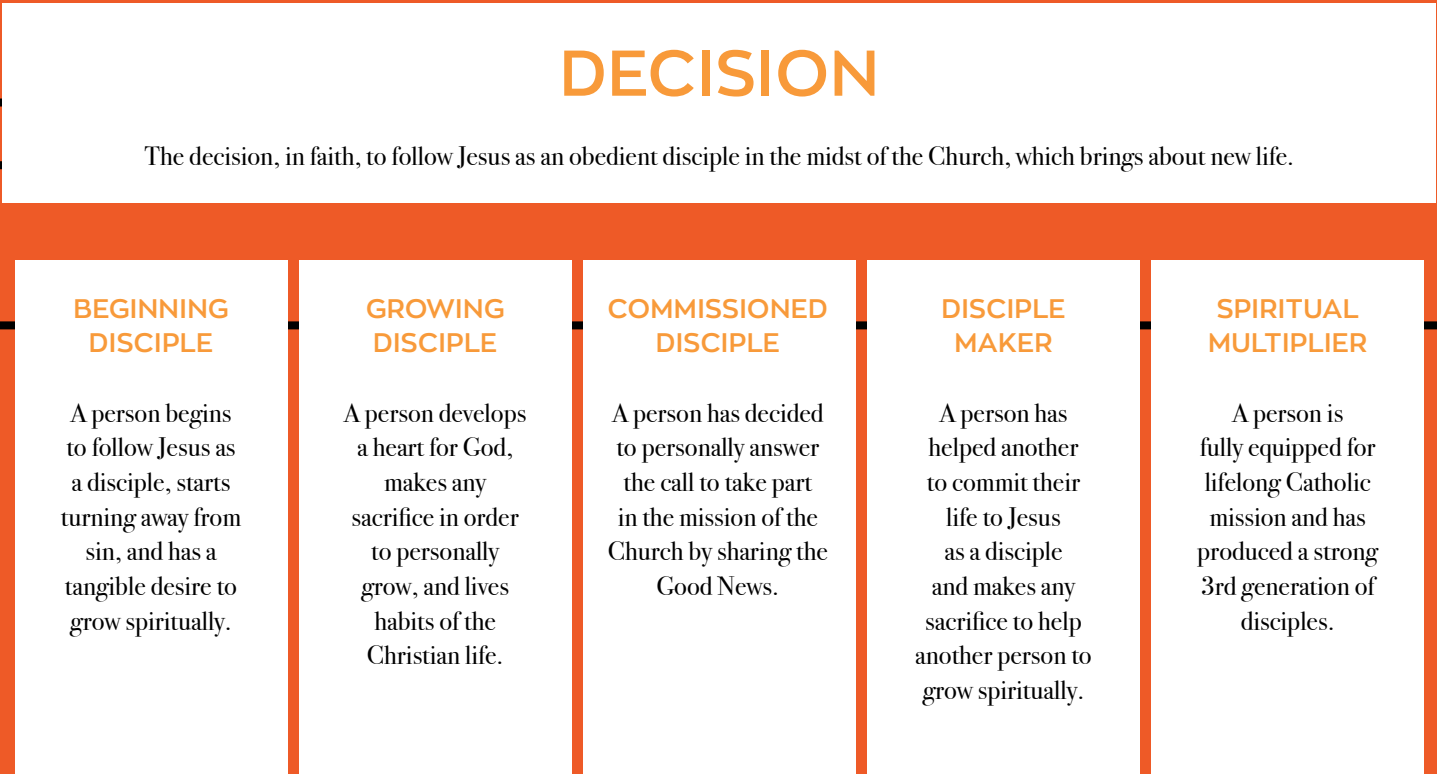
PASSIVE  
DISPOSITION

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

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.



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.

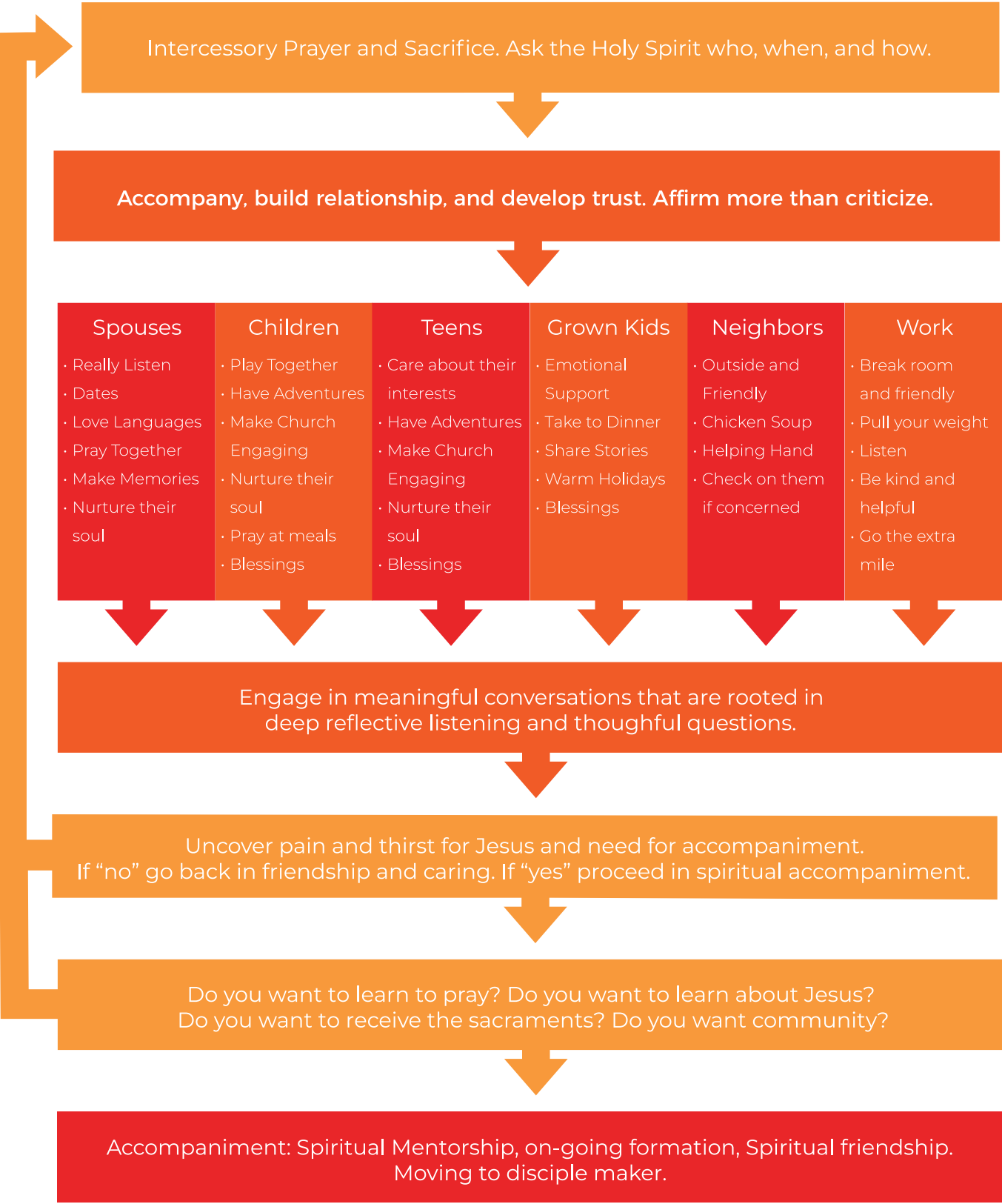
In sharing, we exchange stories – often deep and engaging accounts of events in our life. Having prayed for direction, God paves our way for deep personal sharing. At this stage, trust is palpable and our Christianity seeps into our activities. We share stories, challenges and triumphs that reflect the 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



School of Faith & Office of Evangelization Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas



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**



*Be Disciples, Make Disciples*

## 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.



## PART 5

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### GREAT SHORT READS

Barron, Bishop Robert. *How to Share Your Faith*, WordOnFireShow.com

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

Martin, Curtis. *Making Missionary Disciples*. Genesee, CO, Fellowship of Catholic University Students, 2018

Ritcher, Msgr. Thomas J. *Integrated Evangelization*. Bismark, ND: Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, 2017.

Sri, Edward. *Into His Likeness: Be Transformed as a Disciple of Christ*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press/Augustine Institute, 2017.

#### GREAT LONGER READS

Barron, Bishop Robert. *To Light A Fire On The Earth*. New York: Crown Publishing. 2017

De Cointet, Pierre; Barbara Morgan; Petroc Willey. *Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis*. San Francisco. Ignatius Press. 2008

Weddell Sherry A. *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus Our Sunday Visitor* ISBN-10: 1612785905 ISBN-13: 978-1612785905

*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.*

#### KEY DOCUMENTS

*General Directory for Catechesis*  
ISBN: 978-1-57455-443-4 Product: 5-443 Perfect Bound Paperback USCCB047  
[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_17041998\\_directory-for-catechesis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html)

#### KEY ENCYCLICALS

Pope Francis. *Evangelii Gaudium/Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican: Vatican Website, Apostolic Exhortation. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html)

Pope John Paul II,. *Catechesi Tradendae/Catechesis in our Time*. Vatican: Vatican Website, Apostolic Exhortation. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/johnpaulii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_16101979\\_catechesi-tradendae.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/johnpaulii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html)

Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi/Envangelization in Modern Times*, Vatican Website, Apostolic Exhortation. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html)



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