



Evangelization Teams

THE "ENGINE" OF
PARISH EVANGELIZATION



Prayer for Evangelization

Loving God, you called each of us by name, and gave your only Son to redeem us. In your faithfulness, you sent the Holy Spirit to complete the mission of Jesus among us. Open our hearts to Jesus. Give us the courage to speak his name to those who are close to us, and the generosity to share his love with those who are far away. We pray that every person throughout the world be invited to know and love Jesus as Savior and Redeemer. May they come to know his all-surpassing love. May that love transform every element of our society. Amen.



Scripture John 19:15 ff.

I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.



Living as Missionary Disciples

- ▶ Encounter
- ▶ Accompany
- ▶ Community
- ▶ Send

Parishes have many resources for encounter and building community.

Who will they send to accompany and invite?



Evangelization Teams

- ▶ “Go and Make Disciples” outlines three broad goals for Catholic evangelization
- ▶ These goals represent the broad and central thrust of evangelization discussion
- ▶ Evangelization teams are essential for some of the goals



Evangelization Teams

The three goals are stated succinctly as:

- ▶ Deepening and renewing our own Catholic faith
- ▶ Sharing faith with others, particularly those without faith or without a family of faith
- ▶ Bringing the values of our faith to bear upon the world



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- ▶ **Goal I** – parishes often have education and liturgy committees to help implement this goal
- ▶ **Goal III** – parishes often have social justice outreach committees to implement this goal





Evangelization Teams

But who will implement the second goal?

Helping our parishes to share faith by inviting others – especially unchurched people and inactive Catholics?

The **evangelization team** uniquely helps the parish implement this second goal... and coordinate with other parish committees to implement evangelizing processes.





Size

How Big Should the Team Be?

There should be about 6-8 people present at the meetings; often, where experience shows that people are not faithful in attending meetings, the team should be big enough to insure that 6-8 are present.



Evangelization Teams

Who Should Be on the Team?

- ▶ Committed Catholics
- ▶ Open to new ways of doing things
- ▶ Having experience with the unchurched or inactive
- ▶ Able to work with people who have doubts
- ▶ Non-judgmental and flexible
- ▶ Not overly committed already



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Openness and patience are indispensable for evangelization ministry— Pope Francis calls this “accompaniment.”





Meetings

How Often Should Teams Meet?

Formation Period: at least every other week

Action Period: at least once a month



Evangelization Teams

Formation Period

This is a time when people read basic documents and come to a common understand of the purposes of the team. It should not be an indefinite period, but several months in duration.





Formation: Basic Documents

- ▶ On Evangelization in the Modern World (1972, Pope Paul VI)
- ▶ Go and Make Disciples (1992, USCCB Catholic Bishops)
- ▶ The Joy of the Gospel (2013, Pope Francis)
- ▶ Living as Missionary Disciples (USCCB, 2017)
- ▶ Vision and mission statements of your parish



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Action Period

During this time, the team, in coordination with the parish staff and other committees, designs outreach activities which make sense for the parish, given its concrete pastoral situation.





Pastoral Process

- ▶ Use “The Joy of the Gospel” to open up areas of evangelization.
- ▶ Use the section on “missionary parishes” to reflect on your particular parish.
- ▶ Begin the outreach with limited, doable activities
- ▶ Do the activities in a context of hope and prayer
- ▶ Review and fine-tune activities



The Parish Context

- ▶ Evangelization teams should not be isolated but should work in tandem with the pastoral staff and pastoral council.
- ▶ Evangelization teams need a liaison person to the pastoral staff (e.g., staff person).
- ▶ Evangelization teams should report to the pastor and pastoral council.



Care and Support

- ▶ Give the team the resources it needs in terms of personnel, time and finances.
- ▶ Give the team a way to report to the staff and have access to parish communication systems.
- ▶ Show support and appreciation for the team.
- ▶ Be prepared to rotate people on and off the team to prevent burnout.



Selecting People

- ▶ Invite people personally after checking with staff and parish personnel – do not just put out a general announcement.
- ▶ Try not to ask those already over-burdened.
- ▶ Don't turn team into a second "charismatic group" or "Legion" praesidium – have diverse forms of piety represented.
- ▶ Invite people who are open to new experiences of God through others.



The Larger Context

- ▶ All evangelization is about the Kingdom of God.
- ▶ Inviting people to the Catholic Church means inviting people to be part of the Kingdom.
- ▶ The Kingdom is mysteriously being built up by God until it comes to fulfillment.
- ▶ Our evangelizing efforts are part of this mystery.
- ▶ Our life of discipleship is already an experience of the Kingdom of God in our daily lives.



Relational Context

- ▶ Evangelization takes place in the context of human dialogue and relationship.
- ▶ Evangelization takes place in the context of ecumenical and inter-religious sensitivity.
- ▶ Evangelization happens because of the work of the Holy Spirit in the world.



Agenda

- ▶ Read numbers 1 – 134 of “The Joy of the Gospel.”
- ▶ Discuss with pastoral staff who might be people to invite onto an evangelization team.
- ▶ Use the training you have received to help train others.
- ▶ Begin thinking what evangelizing outreach might look like in your parish setting.
- ▶ Explore these ideas with pastor, pastoral staff and council... and begin to implement them!



Next Week's Final Meeting

- ▶ We will be using Zoom, a different webinar platform for next week's meeting. Please be on the lookout for the webinar URL later this week along with the recording for this session. You just click on the link and it will bring you to the Zoom meeting.
- ▶ Next week's meeting will be more sharing and discussion based. If you have a webcam and microphone we will be inviting you to share with us.

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