



Session Four:  
Accompany

# Practice of Evangelization In Our Parishes



## Opening Prayer

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.

# Accompaniment

- A basic pastoral strategy for today.
- Begins with the person as she/he is.
- Commits to leading people toward healing.
- Involving patience, hope, presence.
- For individuals and for communities.





# Art of Accompaniment

The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this “art of accompaniment” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. *Ex 3:5*). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life.

(Joy of the Gospel, 169)



## Accompaniment and Freedom

Although it sounds obvious, spiritual accompaniment must lead others ever closer to God, in whom we attain true freedom. Some people think they are free if they can avoid God; they fail to see that they remain existentially orphaned, helpless, homeless. They cease being pilgrims and become drifters, flitting around themselves and never getting anywhere. To accompany them would be counterproductive if it became a sort of therapy supporting their self-absorption and ceased to be a pilgrimage with Christ to the Father.

(Joy of the Gospel, 170)





# How Do We Accompany Each Other?

## **Prayer**

- How do we help parishioners to pray?
- How do we teach different methods?
- How do we facilitate prayer at the church and at home?

## **Growth in Scripture**

- How do we make Scripture more accessible for Catholics?
- How do we increase reading, studying, and sharing of scripture?
- How do we show our faith as rooted in Scripture?



# Accompanying Ministries

## Review resources and support for parishioners

- **Seniors:** serving their needs; helping them serve
- **Parents:** keeping them engaged, empowering them in faith
- **Young Adults:** developing space for Young Adults in parish
- **Youth:** providing resources for community and discipleship





# Review Access Parishioners Have

- Religious Formation
  - This needs to be a life-long growth in our faith
- Small Group Sharing
  - An essential part of seeing oneself as a disciple
  - For specific times
  - Year-around as part of parish life
- Counseling and Spiritual Direction





# Parish Resources for Small Groups

- Bulletin or website:
  - Reflection on the Sunday Gospel with Discussion Questions
- USCCB Resources
  - Reflection on the Sunday and Daily Scriptures
- Various publishers



# Small Group Resources

## Lent



*Living the Eucharist*®



## Any Time



# Poll: Scripture

**Click the resources regularly offered by your parish:**

- Small group sharing
- Scripture study
- Scripture reflections (bulletin or otherwise)
- Family prayer/sharing resources
- Prayer networks



# Accompaniment in Outreach

- **Shaping the RCIA to accompany people at various stages of their faith journey.**
  - Inquiry: getting to know the individual, getting to know the parish community
  - Ongoing Inquiry throughout the year
  - Attention to different needs of catechumens and candidates
  - Formation as dialogue and sharing
- **Accompany less-than-active Catholics**
  - Resources for people to make connections to the parish
  - Building on connections (parents, Young Adults, new neighbors)
  - Seeing reconciliation as an ongoing parish ministry



# Awareness of Generational Differences and Changes

## Accompaniment means:

- We recognize that we come with different backgrounds.
- The world before 1960 is different from the world after 1960.
- We give people space to find different rhythms and expressions.
- We try to be sensitive about our own assumptions.
- We recognize we are all in one community.





# Increasing Opportunities for Service



- Make serving others a constant theme of the parish.
- Set up a center where people can suggest service needs.
- Invite social justice committee to help coordinate needs and skills.
- Celebrate service projects when completed.
- Celebrate people who consistently give service.
- Connect with other organizations that serve in your area.





# Ecumenical-Interfaith

- We are committed to our Church, but we are not closed off.
- We connect with others based on common values.
- The Kingdom of God extends beyond the defined boundaries of the Church.
- The Kingdom call us to connect, serve, and pray with others.
- St. John Paul II, popes Benedict and Francis have shown us the way.
- Because our faith is centered, we can reach others.





# Poll: Parish Initiatives

**Click if your parish regularly is involved in:**

- Parish service projects (seniors, homeless, hunger, etc.)
- Ecumenical activities and sharing groups
- Interfaith interactions



# Leadership as “Communio”

## Communio:

As a community with each person having callings and charisms, we share together to build up our parish family and the Kingdom of God. All have a place; all share and give.



# Parish: Two Sides

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## **Institutional Side:**

Making decisions, plans,  
acquiring resources.

## **Family Side:**

People who are bound to  
each other.





# Accompany Others

Today more than ever we need men and women who, on the basis of their experience of accompanying others, are familiar with processes which call for prudence, understanding, patience and docility to the Spirit, so that they can protect the sheep from wolves who would scatter the flock. We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing.

(Joy of the Gospel, 171)



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