



Finding the Potential of the RCIA: Becoming an Inviting Church

Presented by:
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Prayer

Loving God,

you called us each 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.

We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.



Good News

The Lotto

The Engagement

The Diploma

The Promotion

We cannot keep Good News to ourselves!



Welcome - Community

- More churches greeting people
- People expect to be greeted
- Some parishes follow up on greeting

By and large, we are not strong in forming parishes with a powerful sense of community and welcome.

We need to change this!

How do we get beyond greeting to welcome?



Invitation

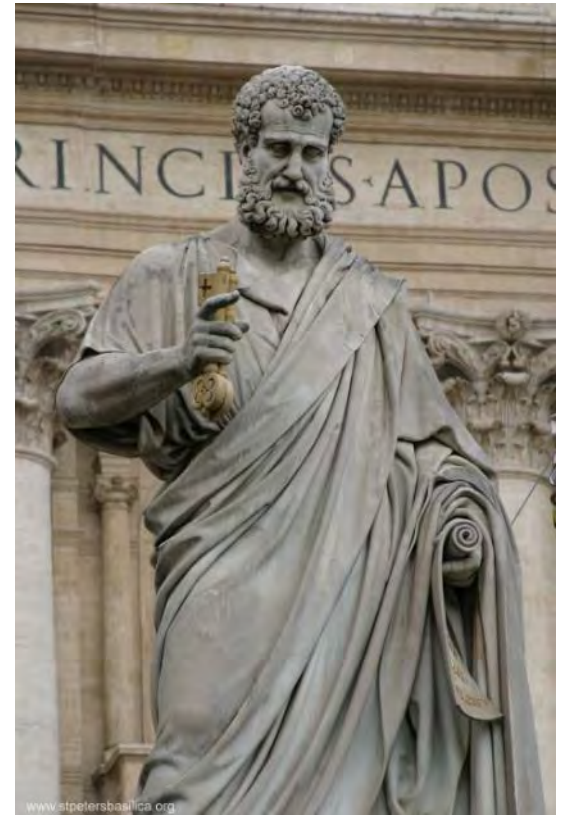
- Why we invite
- Inviting seekers
- How we can invite
 - Who can invite
 - Let's invite!



Why We Invite:

We have so much to offer people today

- We have the oldest Christian tradition.
- We have a vibrant Christian tradition that offers people essential dimensions of discipleship: scriptural, sacramental, communal, moral, and social justice.
- We are “Catholic”—we welcome everyone!
- Our tradition centers on Jesus Christ; it reinforces our relationship with Jesus and the Spirit in multiple ways.
- Our tradition can negotiate between the worlds of faith and intellect; we are not fundamentalists, fideists, or deists.



Pope Francis on Why We Share

We share because of the joy we have as believers.

*“The Joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew.”
(The Joy of the Gospel 1)*





Why We Share (cont'd)

- Spiritual hungers are everywhere because so much of modern life is causing doubts and stress.
- Humans need to have a deep sense of meaning and purpose.
- Growing numbers of people who are “unattached” and are possibly open to being attached to communities of value and faith

Inviting Others

To invite people, to share faith, is an opportunity to enhance their lives in accord with the freedom and deepest desires of their hearts.

We are basically inviting people into the Kingdom that Jesus inaugurated for all of humankind.



Conversion

In “seeking to convert” others, Catholics offer people the opportunity to respond to God’s Good News, the Kingdom of God, from their personal freedom because of the richness that will come to their lives by knowing Jesus, and living in his Spirit, in the Catholic tradition.

- To the Kingdom of God embodied in Jesus
- To respond to the Holy Spirit at work in the person and the world
- To stand in living continuity with the community in which Jesus dwells
- To begin to experience the Kingdom now through a life of discipleship



Salvation - The Fullness of Life and Love

- Salvation is a crucial issue.
- Humankind needs to be saved.
- Humans cannot save themselves.
- Human beings cannot satisfy their need for “transcendence” — a context of meaning that goes beyond their decades of life.
- Jesus comes precisely to give us the “fullness of life and love” which we quest.





Discipleship

- To invite people to the RCIA is to invite them to a life of discipleship.
- To ask people to serve the Kingdom is either to invite people to become disciples or to deepen a discipleship that has already begun.

Personal Sphere



- Witnessing to my faith by my life
- Sharing faith with other Catholics
- Knowing my own story of faith
- Sharing faith with others in a way that is appropriate in the lives of people we are engaging.
- Conversation with peers—coworkers, friends
- With friends' gatherings in our homes for meals
- Or gatherings at Christmas and Easter
- Or gathering for celebrations of the sacraments or other family events

Helping Catholics Articulate Faith

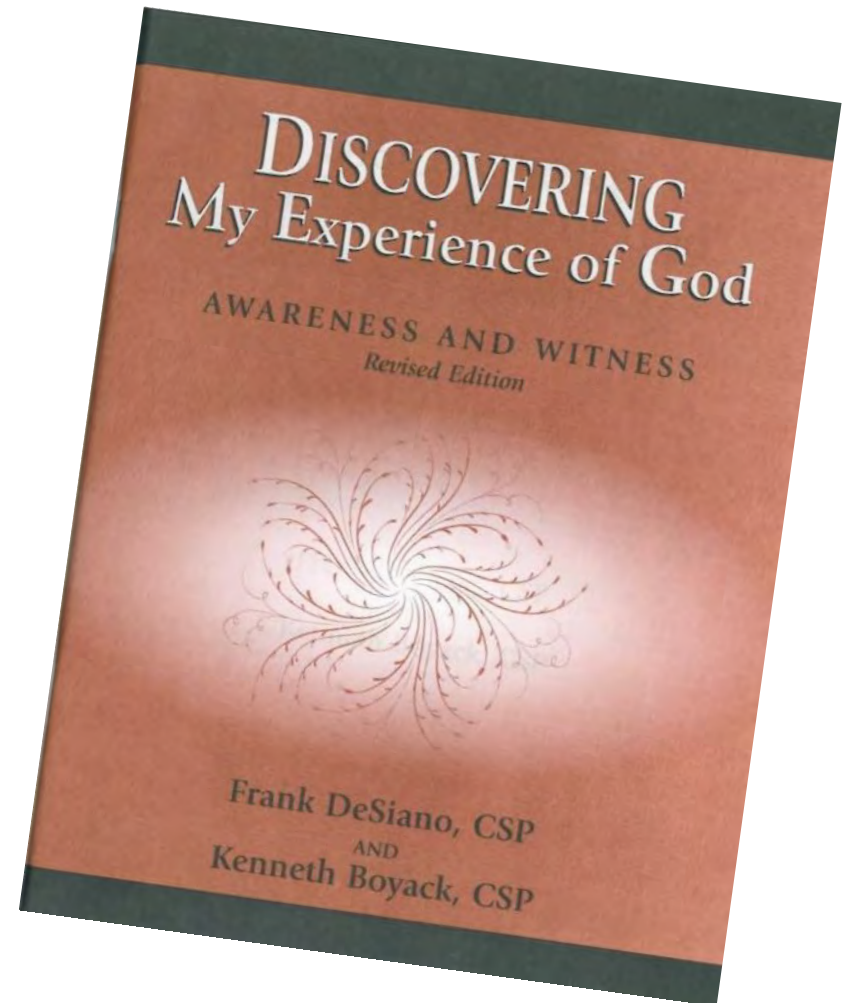
How do we help Catholics get in touch with and become open about their own experience of faith, of their encounter with Jesus Christ?





Resources for Articulating Personal Faith

- Small group sharing
- Daily meditation and prayer—“Magnificat” or “Give Us This Day” and other resources for prayer
- “Discovering My Experience of God: Awareness and Witness”



The Journey/ El Camino



Designed to help Catholics and other believers recognize the “personal encounter” that is part of every believer’s life.

- My Encounter with Jesus
- My Encounter with Jesus’ Community of faith
- My Encounter with Jesus’ Way of life



Parish-Personal



- To host/offer occasions for parishioners to invite others. These do not have to be liturgical events—though they have to be more than bingo or the annual carnival.
- Encourage parishioners to invite peers.
- Create invitations that parishioners can use.
- Support parishioners in their inviting—meet their guests, thank them for inviting.



Simple Tools—Outreach to Friends

Because you are my friend

My church family wishes to honor you!

I would be honored to have you attend

Sunday, February 20, 2030

11:00 AM Services

Followed immediately by a

Reception in your honor.

Please know you are in our prayers!

Parish-Corporate



- Draw up brochures about your parish.
- Draw up brochures about the Catholic faith.
- Create flyers to talk about the RCIA.
- Develop a campaign to invite people to the RCIA.
- Witness by people who have recently entered the church or become active



Simple Tools—Invitation Cards

Parish “Business” Card



Saint Whoever Church
“Where you are always welcome!”

111 2nd Street
Anywhere, ST 12345
(111) 222-3333 www.stwhoever.org

Services: Sat. 5 PM, Sun. 8 & 11 AM



Brochures

Keep them
simple.

Stick to one
theme.

Make general
points.

Use a lot of
photos of
people.

Show your
parish alive!



Parish Brochure



Good News is
Happening!

Daily Mass
8:30am

Adoration Chapel
Daily 8am – 8pm

Confessions
Daily
7am-9am
Noon-1:00pm
5:00-6:30pm

Sunday Masses
Saturday 5:30pm
Sunday 8:30am, 10:30am,
Noon, 6:30pm

Visit Us

.....

123 Anywhere St., Any City, ST 12345
(123) 456 7890
hello@reallygreatsite.com
www.reallygreatsite.com



Saint Whoever Church

.....

"Where you are
always welcome!"

Parish Brochure



We Proclaim Good News

- Weekly Bible Study
- Special Revivals
- Ministers of the Word
- Formation of Adults & Children
- Vacation Bible School

We Celebrate Good News

- Sunday Mass
- Powerful Preaching
- Joyful Choir
- Committed Ministers
- Friendly Welcome
- Hospitality after Services

We Share Good News

People Coming Together

- Children's After School
- Teen Group
- Young Adult Sharing Group
- Seniors with Leisure
- Parish Prayer Ministry
- Social Concerns and Action Group
- Evangelization and Welcome Team
- Bereavement Ministry



RCIA Brochure



*Many think they
know Jesus, but
they do not know
peace in their lives.*

They know there is
something more to life.

They know they are
searching. They wonder
where they can search...

**YOU CAN SEARCH
WITH US!**

PHONE

Call us anytime at
555.555.5555

EMAIL

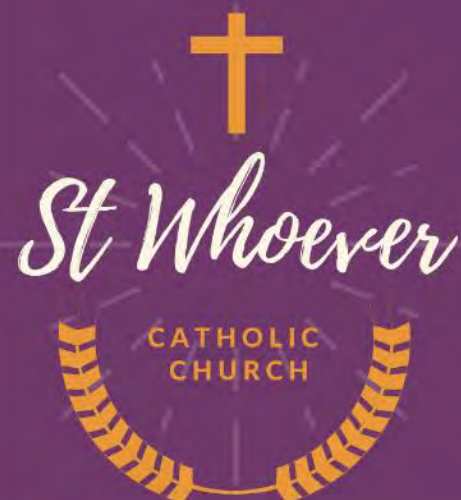
parishoffice@stw.org
www.stw.org

SEEK CHRIST IN THE BEAUTY OF THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

- Explore with others
- Use the Scriptures
- Use ancient and tested wisdom
- Without pressure

THE R.C.I.A.

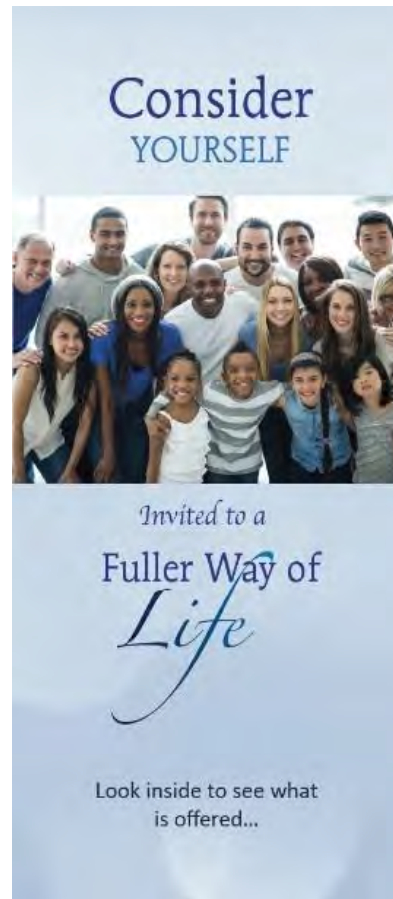
Respected in all Christian
communities for its ability to
help people search and find
where God is leading them.



*Have You Really
Met Him Yet?*

Maybe We Can Help!

Catholics Reaching Out



Catholics Reaching Out



The Catholic Community wants to share the

PEACE...

A way to catch up with the non-stop running of life

WISDOM...

centuries of meditation on the Word of God and what it means for the enrichment of our lives

COMMUNITY...

People just like you coming together as a family in faith, to grow together and help each other

GROWTH...

Ministries that can help you and your family grow as disciples as you explore the rich traditions of the faith

ETERNAL LIFE...

A Gospel and way of life that unites you to God forever

*A place where you
can belong...*

JUST CONSIDER

- ✦ The Catholic Church has 20 centuries of spreading the Gospel to every continent and culture
- ✦ Constant witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- ✦ A tradition of calling people to holiness and producing saints both heroic and everyday
- ✦ Unbroken commitment to serving humankind in the love of Jesus through hospitals, education, programs for the needy, and social advocacy
- ✦ An intellectual tradition that spans philosophy, the arts, and the sciences, which invites modern people, with all their questions and knowledge, to faith
- ✦ A world-wide network of communities joined in one vision
- ✦ A tradition that venerates the ongoing and real Presence of Jesus Christ in our worship
- ✦ A path that lets people inquire about Jesus and his Church without pressure, at their own pace, as the Spirit leads them



Richness
of our faith with you.



If you've been looking everywhere for answers, and still haven't found them, we invite you to find out what the Catholic Church offers.

Over a billion people belong to the Church...and hundreds of thousands more join each year.

We have a place for everyone.

*We have a place
for you.*

Catholics Reaching Out

- DVD with 4 videos
 - 1 video devoted to Seekers
- Parish Manual with process to plan invitation in the parish
- Booklets for Seekers
- Booklets for Inactive Catholics



Parish and Beyond



- Internet presence:
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Twitter
 - Flocknotes
- Mailing opportunities
 - Postcards
- Door-knob baggies for parishioners to put on their neighbors' doors
- Networking with other parishes to get the word out

Mail

- Mailing to your own parishioners to invite them or others they know
- Mailing to those who move into your parish (New Movers Program available from Paulist Evangelization Ministries)
- Mailing with other parishes to cover a larger area and share costs





Internet

- How up-to-date is our parish website?
- What do we have to engage seekers?
- What do we have to engage inactive Catholics?
- Do we have a way to send to all parishioners?





Pope Francis on How to Invite

Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, [believers] should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet. It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but “by attraction.” (14)

- “For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?” (8)
- “Consequently, an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!” (10)
- “Clearly Jesus does not want us to be grandees who look down upon others, but men and women of the people.” (271)

The Joy of the Gospel

Encounter



Evangelization can only happen when we have established a relationship with another, and that person gives us permission to talk about faith.



Pope Francis on How to Engage

“In this (personal) preaching, which is always respectful and gentle, the first step is personal dialogue, when the other person speaks and shares his or her joys, hopes and concerns for loved ones, or so many other heartfelt needs. Only afterwards is it possible to bring up God’s word, perhaps by reading a Bible verse or relating a story, but always keeping in mind the fundamental message: the personal love of God who became man, who gave himself up for us, who is living and who offers us his salvation and his friendship.”

The Joy of the Gospel 128



Attitudes for Inviting



- Friendly and joyous
- Open and accessible
- Humble, led by the Spirit of Jesus
- Sharing on an even level
- Non-argumentative
- Speaking from the heart, not just “the head”



Evangelization

- Primarily peer-to-peer
- Have people think about their “networks” of associates—friends, co-workers, neighbors.
- Encourage more active Catholics to invite less-than-active Catholics to various renewals, or social events, or other gatherings.
- Create opportunities for parishioners to have a reason to share—parish and neighborhood events.

NO to Proselytizing



- Dismissing others' faith
- Assuming others are damned
- Stereotyping others in a way that is unfair
- Assuming others are not able to be led by the Spirit
- Offering false motives for faith (e.g., benefits, advancement, “ticket to heaven”)

RCIA



- How do we talk about the RCIA to parishioners and to others?
- How do we get the invitation out?
- Do people know the RCIA is an opportunity for us to discover Jesus in their lives?
- Do people know the RCIA is an invitation to conversion and discipleship?

Chatting up the RCIA



The most important
message we have—
encountering Jesus today!

The “Good News” that we
live, celebrate, and dare
to share with others

A process to help people know
the depths of their own
searching, grow in their
acceptance of Jesus, and be
assured that Jesus is in their lives



RCIA:

One of the Essential Ministries of the Parish

- Only 15% of Catholic parishes have a year-round RCIA—85% do not.
- How many parishes only “advertise” the RCIA during the summer months?
- How many parishes tell inquirers to “come back in September” when the RCIA begins?
- How many seekers even feel that the Catholic Church is inviting them to Jesus Christ?

Adult Converts-- Decline

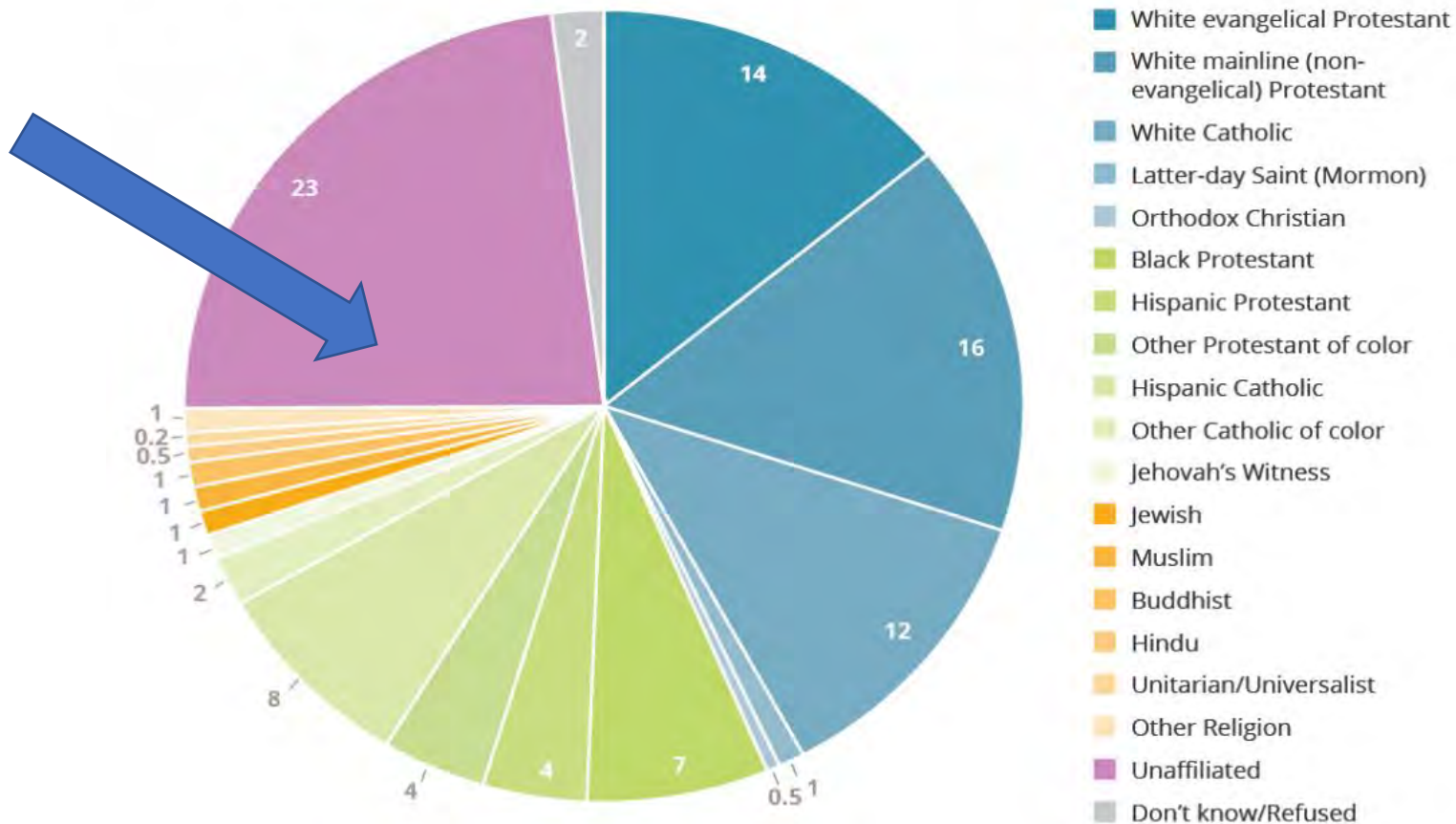
- CARA, Georgetown, Statistics, 2021

	1995	2000	2010	2020
Baptisms	66,866	77,578	41,600	35,799
Received into the Catholic Church	76,176	95,663	70,318	53,540

Unaffiliated

FIGURE 1. The American Religious Landscape in 2020

Percent who identify as:



Source: PRRI 2020 American Values Atlas.

Pope Francis on Who Can Invite

Every Baptized Believer!

“Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the “peripheries” in need of the light of the Gospel.”

The Joy of the Gospel 20

Who Can Invite (cont'd)

- Peers reaching out to peers
- Young reaching out to young
- Parents reaching out to parents
- Children reaching out to parents
- Professionals reaching out to professionals
- Seniors reaching out to seniors
- Neighbors reaching out to neighbors



Resources



Resources

Neighbors Reaching Neighbors:

A collection of ideas for reaching out



We're Inviting Our Neighbors...
To a Special Event:

St. Joseph's Church Choir Concert
Saturday, August 24, 2013
at 1:00 PM



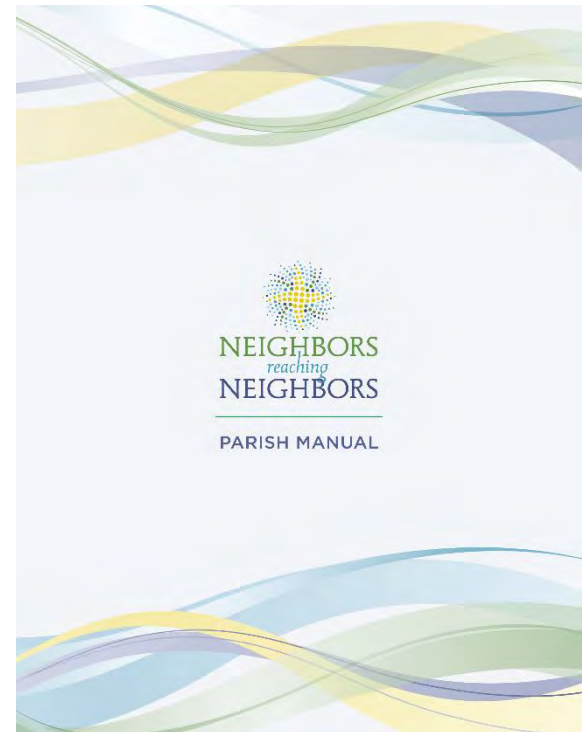
We believe it's important
for people to be connected with each other
today, and churches need to be connected
to their neighborhoods and their people.
That's why we're inviting you.

**Join us for hospitality and
friendly welcome.**

We'd like to get to know you, and know if
there's a way for us to serve you.

We know people search for faith and
community at different times in their lives.
You are always welcome to visit with us.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church
123 Iris Street, City
(555) 555-5555
Patrick Doe
www.StJoes.org/2013concert



The Virtual Encounter

We need even more imagination to connect with people in a time of pandemic.

Maybe we'll think of better ways to connect that we can use all year around.

- **A Zoom-invite:**

Give people a time and a zoom connection to talk to someone in the pre-Catechumenal ministry.

We're always wanting to meet and chat with you!

- **Special Focus:**

Ask congregation to put out "invites" to people who have ever asked them about faith, friends without a church, people thinking of marrying Catholics.

- **Safe-distance Reception**

A comfortable room large enough for people to feel they can ask questions but not be too close to others





Let's Invite!

- We can do this!
- People will be open.
- Our Catholics can be engaged.
- We can facilitate how Catholics can be empowered in reaching out.

www.pathwaysinfaith.org

NEW RESOURCES FOR THE RCIA AND ADULT FAITH FORMATION



COMING IN FEBRUARY 2022

Introducing new online, subscription-based tools to make the catechumenate more responsive to personal sharing and conversion and to help adults explore dimensions of their faith.

Paulist Evangelization Ministries

- Fr. Frank DeSiano, CSP;
Ms. Heather Kinney
- Paulist Evangelization
Ministries
- PO Box 29121
- Washington, DC 20017
- 202-832-5022
- www.pemdc.org
- www.pathwaysinfaith.org



**PAULIST
EVANGELIZATION
MINISTRIES**

***Reaching the Unreached
in Faith***