

# A Sample Guide to Door to Door Evangelizing

## Purpose:

- Bring Christ to people
- Bring people closer to Christ
- Invite people to come to your parish
- Pray for the needs of others

## Overview:

- The team decides on the areas to be visited. At the beginning, we suggest that you pick a neighborhood that is at the edge of your parish boundaries. Then work your way toward the parish.
- Visit only residences (not businesses).
- The leader of the team does all of the talking. The resident may feel overwhelmed if they have to talk to two people at the same time.
- The silent member of the team listens and prays quietly. Pay attention to what's going on, but pray quietly. When you see that the process can be improved, say so - between homes.
- The script should be kept brief and to the point of the visit.
- The team keeps track of their progress. Keep track of the responses e.g., answered opened doors, different types of responses, revisits, etc.
- The team notes which homes should be revisited and why. These notes will be used when you revisit them so they need to be clear and complete.

## **Preparation:**

- Prepare a map of the area you will be visiting. Make one to fit your needs.
- Color in the streets you have visited already after each outing.
- Use a tracking sheet to record your results.

## **Evangelization:**

- Pray before you start. Ask the Holy Spirit to quiet your hearts, guide your steps, and give you the words that need to be spoken (no more and no less).
- Pray between homes.
- Pray after the evangelization outing to give thanks.

## **Scripts:**

- Follow this communication flow for the introduction to all households.
- Once the bell is rung and the party residing opens the door, immediately smile, make eye contact and respond with a friendly greeting.
- Then start with, “Hi, we are neighbors of yours from (say parish name) and we are visiting the neighborhood welcoming people to our Church.”
- After this introduction, pause and smile to communicate that we are not selling anything or asking for a donation. This will also create a friendly atmosphere. Pausing and smiling are non-verbal cues for the resident to respond.
- Be prepared to meet both Catholic and non-Catholic households.
- For non-Catholic households, begin by asking if they are active in their faith. If the indication is that they do attend services every Sunday, ask them to pray for church unity.
- Be aware that you may not know all the answers to every question you are asked. Politely respond “That is a good question however, I

do not know the answer but I will find out the answer and get back with you soon.”

- Be prepared to ask them if there are any questions that we might answer about the Catholic Church prior to departing.
- Finally, ask if they would be offended if you left them with a gift, i.e., bookmark, CD, rosary, or a book. It is likely that by offering the gifts in this way, people will be more willing to accept them.
- For Catholic households, modify the approach by inquiring what parish they belong to.
- If the person is a fallen-away Catholic, lightly attempt to find the reason why and length of time away.
- Be aware that sometimes people are hurting and may respond to that question in a hostile manner. If so, be empathetic.
- Before leaving ask if there is anything that they would like us to pray for.
- Be prepared to pray spontaneously and tell them that you and others will be praying for them later.
- Leave a parish bulletin, or a flyer to invite them to a parish event.
- If they are a candidate for a revisit, ask if it would be okay to revisit them. Accept a no, not pressing them any further. If appropriate ask for a phone number or email so you can follow up with them on any questions they may have asked.

### **Script for Door to Door Evangelization**

Remember: **To pray – asking the Holy Spirit for courage and wisdom.**

Remember: **K.I.S.S – keep it simple.**

Remember: **S.E.E – smile, eye contact, and excitement!!**

Be yourselves! We are letting people know about Jesus, we are carrying out the mission that He chose us for. God has blessed each of you with many gifts. It is not important to follow a script,

just be friendly and positive. We are just talking about your parish, and the Catholic Church. We are not forcing conversion or telling people they are wrong for following a different religion.

**Introduction:**

Smile and be excited. Hi, we are from (say your parish name), here in (say neighborhood). Have you ever heard of us or know where we are located? We are stopping by homes in the area to introduce ourselves, and to answer any questions people may have about the Catholic faith.

**Body:**

If they say **NO** (to the question “Have you heard of us?”)

- Ask them if they have any questions about our faith.

If they say **YES** (to the question “Have you heard of us?”)

- Ask them what parish they belong to or where they worship
- If they say they do not go to Mass anymore, ask them if they mind if you ask why
- Do your best to invite them back. Be friendly, positive, and excited.
- Address any concerns
- Ask if they would be interested in talking to a priest sometime

**Close:**

- Thank them for taking the time to talk to you
- Ask them if they are interested in a free gift, i.e., bookmark, CD, book, rosary
- Ask them if they have any prayer requests
- Let them know that you will keep them in your prayers
- Wave good bye and go to the next house

**Important:**

- If people are not open or negative, thank them for their time, tell them to have a blessed day, and let them know we will pray for them.
- Do not waste your time on negative or angry people; there are many good natured people.
- Remember we are simply planting the seed, if they don't want to talk, wish them well and go to the next house. *We don't have to be successful, just faithful!*

**Remember: Prayer, K.I.S.S. & S.E.E. - Be friendly and you will do great!!!**

**Resources for Planning, Outreach, Evangelization, and Formation**

## **PARISH PLANNING:**

***Best Practices for Parishes*** Rev. Robert Duggan (Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association /PNCEA) Evaluates all aspects of parish life so a parish can be its best and most welcoming.

***Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*** (USCCB), Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1992.

## **OUTREACH:**

***It's Not the Same Without You: Coming Home to the Catholic Church*** Mitch Finley, Doubleday, 2003. Understanding alienated Catholics and strategies to reach them.

***What Jesus Said (and why it matters now)***, Timothy D. Fallon, 2006, St. Anthony Messenger Press. A guide to understanding how Jesus is dynamically at work in daily life, with step by step reflection and prayer process, involving personalizing the Gospel stories.

## **EVANGELIZATION:**

***Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, Christifideles Laici***, Pope John Paul II, Pauline Book and Media, Boston, Massachusetts, 1988.

***National Directory for Catechesis***, Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005.

***On Evangelization in the Modern World***, Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI, Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1975.

## **ADULT FORMATION:**

***Believing in Jesus: A Popular Overview of the Catholic Faith***, Leonard Foley, OFM, 6th Edition, 2005, St. Anthony Messenger Press. This classic in adult catechesis covers the complete spectrum of the Catholic faith. Updated to reflect the latest church documents and events, it is cross-referenced to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Includes discussion questions.

***Catechism of the Catholic Church***, Broadway, New York: Doubleday Press, 1995

***Why Catholic?*** (Renew International) Adult formation process based on Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Four 12 session books, available in Spanish.

## **Possible questions you may encounter while going out door to door**

- Why do Catholics call their priests “Father”?
- What must you do to be saved?
- Why do you pray to idols?
- Why do you pray to or worship Mary? To the Saints?
- Why do you confess sins to a priest, rather than going directly to God?
- Why do you worship wafers/Eucharist?
- Why can't Catholic priests get married?
- Why did all the priest scandals happen?
- Why can't women be priests?
- Why does the Church feel they can tell me not to use birth control?
- With so many Church denominations, why should I be Catholic?
- Why do you think the Catholic Church is the one true Church?
- Are you guaranteed Heaven?
- Why does the Catholic Church believe in purgatory?
- What do you believe happens after death?
- Is Hell real?
- Where does the Pope get his authority to lead the Church on earth?
- How come I don't feel like I am being fed in the Catholic Church?
- Do you have to go to Mass every Sunday?
- What is the purpose of life?
- Why can't everyone receive Holy Communion?
- What is a Sacrament?
- Why are the bishops beating up the sisters who take care of the poor?
- Why do bad things happen to good people?
- Do you have to accept *everything* the Church teaches?

## **Possible questions to reflect on prior to going out door to door**

- How do we address divorce, and the annulment process?
- How do we address anger towards the Church?
- How do we address fallen away Catholics?
- What do we say to active Protestants?
- How do we explain apostolic succession?
- How do we defuse reluctant or angry people?
- How do we explain religious liberty?

Listed below are several topics we suggest you study so you can learn to explain your faith *clearly*, defend it *charitably*, and share it *confidently*.

- Practical points on how to read the Bible
- Reading the Catechism of the Catholic Church
- The Eucharist-Real Presence
- Church Fathers
- Marian Doctrines
- Scandals in the Church
- Reconciliation
- Praying to the Saints, or praying to Mary
- Purgatory
- The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
- Sacraments
- Divorce & Annulments

### **Know, live, & spread your Catholic faith – Pillar of Fire, Pillar of Truth**

#### **Know your Catholic faith!**

*You cannot live your faith if you do not know it, and you cannot share with others what you do not first make your own (CCC 429).* Learning your Catholic faith takes some effort, but it is effort well spent because the study is, quite literally, infinitely rewarding.

#### **Live your Catholic faith!**

*Your Catholic faith is a public thing. It is not meant to be left behind when you leave home (CCC 2472).* But be forewarned: Being a public Catholic involves risk and loss. You will find some doors closed to you. You will lose some friends. You will be considered an outsider. But, as a consolation, remember our Lord's words to the persecuted: *"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven"* (Matt. 5:12).

#### **Spread your Catholic faith!**

Jesus Christ wants us to bring the whole world to the truth, and the truth is Jesus Himself, who is *"the Way, the Truth, and the Life"* (Jn 14:6). Spreading the faith is a task not only for bishops, priests, and religious. It's a task for all Catholics (CCC 905).

Just before his Ascension, our Lord told his apostles, *"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"* (Matt. 28:19–20). If we want to observe all that Jesus commanded, if we want to believe all He taught, we must follow Him through His Church. This is our great challenge—and our great privilege.

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