



Convocation of Parish Leaders

EVANGELIZING MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

Post-Convocation Resource Guide

God is sending us, but to whom?

As missionary disciples, we are called to bring this question to prayer:

Lord, who are you calling me to share my faith with?

Holy Spirit, please help me to know when and how.

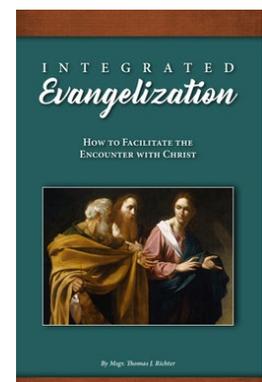
As you read through the following list, think of people by name, if possible, that fit into these groups. This does not mean we are asking you to create a plan to reach out to every person on your list right now. It is here to help you brainstorm and wrestle with the question, “Lord, where should I/we begin?”

- Family member(s) and Friend(s)
- Coworker, former coworker
- Neighbor(s), person/family from your neighborhood
- Person you see working at the grocery store, gas station, coffee shop, somewhere else you frequent
- People you know from your child(ren)’s school, activities, sports, etc.
- People you know from organizations and activities in which you are involved
- Single people (young adults, single parents, widows/widowers, etc.)
- Families with young children
- Couples whose children are grown (“empty nesters”)
- The elderly
- New parishioners, people who have recently moved to your town, immigrants, ethnic minorities within your community
- People in our parishes that attend Mass with their Catholic spouses, but are not Catholic themselves
- People who have left or drifted from the Catholic Church
- People who have experienced crisis, illness, or death in their families
- The poor in your community
- Who else?..

Integrated Evangelization: How to Facilitate the Encounter with Christ

In this booklet, Msgr. Thomas Richter delves into the process of praying about who the Lord is sending you to in order to share Jesus Christ. From there, he lays out a practical method of evangelization that anyone can live in a natural, yet intentional way.

Ways to use this booklet: You could go through this booklet with your parish and finance councils, parish staff, current adult education groups, ministry leaders, volunteers, and others. If your parish is interested in purchasing additional copies, contact Deacon Mark Krejci (mkrejci@crookston.org).



Growing as a Disciple

Learning to recognize the voice of God in your life and to discern his will can take place in many ways but the following can be seen as the basic pillars in the life of a disciple.

- **Prayer:** Consistent daily prayer
- **Sacraments:** Frequenting the sacraments of the Eucharist and Confession
- **Almsgiving:** Through the gifts of your time, talent, and treasure
- **Study:** In particular, spend time reading and praying with Sacred Scripture because, “In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them” (*Dei Verbum*, 21).
- **Community:** The life of discipleship is not meant to be lived in isolation. Gathering with others to pray, study, and for fellowship builds community within the parish family.

There are a growing number of resources that delve into the life of discipleship. If you are looking for a place to begin, the following three books are well-written, accessible to people at any stage of their faith journey, and lend themselves to group study format.

[*Into His Likeness: Be Transformed as a Disciple of Christ*](#) by Dr. Edward Sri (2017). Each chapter ends with reflection questions, which make it ideal for group studies. Bulk discounts are available through Lighthouse Catholic Media.

[*Called: Becoming an Everyday Disciple in a Post-Christian World- A Five-Week Guide*](#) by Kevin Cotter (2018). Each chapter ends with reflection questions. Kevin Cotter spent eleven years working for Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) and is now the executive director of Amazing Parish.

[*The Activated Disciple: Taking Your Faith to the Next Level*](#) by Jeff Cavins (2018). Ascension will also publish a companion journal that goes with this book.

Retreats: Places of Encounter

Part of the work of evangelization is offering people opportunities to encounter Jesus in a personal and profound way. One such opportunity is through attending retreats, which offer people the chance to step out of their ordinary routine, away from work, technology, and overall busyness to spend time in prayer with the Lord. There are several such opportunities in the Diocese of Crookston Office of Formation in Discipleship as well as through the Diocesan Cursillo program.

Cursillo- From the Cursillo website, “*Cursillo is a three-day learning, sharing, inspirational experience of living in a Christian community. The word "Cursillo" is Spanish, meaning "a short course." ... During the three days of a Cursillo weekend a person not only hears inspiring talks on what it really means to be a Christian, but actually experiences the joy of building and being part of a genuine Christian community.*

See the [Cursillo website](#) for upcoming retreat dates. Note that an application and a sponsor are required to attend. If you have any questions, contact the [Cursillo Secretariat](#).

Welcome: CRHP 2.0- Many people are unable to attend retreats due to distance and scheduling. One alternative is to offer a retreat at your parish. Welcome, which was formerly called Christ Renews His Parish, offers the retreat experience without leaving your community. Several years ago, the Dynamic Catholic Institute acquired Christ Renews His Parish and revised the program. The format is similar but now parishes receive more user-friendly leader guides, assistance from the Dynamic Catholic staff, and team formation materials. There is a one-time startup fee and then an smaller yearly renewal fee. A parish cluster, several parishes under one pastor, is able to purchase one set of rights, which can be then used in all of the parishes of the cluster.

The Kerygma

When evangelizing, we are sharing Jesus Christ with people, and in particular, we are sharing with them the message of the kerygma. The kerygma is the heart of the Gospel message, the basic points of the salvation story. In an article titled [The Content of the Kerygma—Good News for the World!](#), Marcel LeJeune, from [Catholic Missionary Disciples](#), laid out the basic points of the kerygma in several ways.

Four Elements - A:

1. The loving plan of God for humanity
2. Sin and its consequences, especially separation from God;
3. God's answer to our problem - in the sending of his Son for our salvation
4. The response this grace calls forth from every person: to repent, believe in Jesus, & be baptized

Four Elements - B:

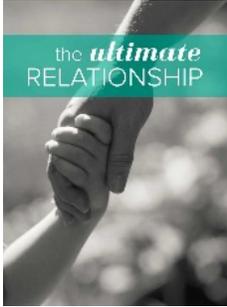
5. 1. God made us for relationship with Him.
6. 2. We sinned and then broke the relationship we were intended to have.
7. 3. Jesus (who is God and man) came to heal that relationship, through sacrificing his life, rising again, and giving us the Church.
8. 4. We have the opportunity to respond, by choosing to have Jesus be our Lord and Savior.

Seven Elements of the Kerygma:

1. God loves you and has plan for your life.
2. Sin will destroy you.
3. Christ Jesus died to save you.
4. Repent and believe the Gospel.
5. Be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit.
6. Abide in Christ and his body the Church.
7. Go make disciples.

"I will go anywhere and do anything in order to communicate the love of Jesus to those who do not know Him or have forgotten Him."

– St. Frances Xavier Cabrini,
*Mother Cabrini was the first
American citizen to be canonized a saint.*



The Ultimate Relationship- This booklet will help if you are looking for a resource that helps people become familiar with the basic Gospel message, the kerygma. “The Ultimate Relationship provides a clear and easy way to share the Gospel message with friends and family in a convenient pocket-sized booklet.” Discounts are available on bulk orders.

Sharing Your Testimony

The following section is adapted from the Young Disciples Apostolate training manual.

A carefully prepared testimony, by the power of the Holy Spirit, can be an incredible tool for sharing your love and faith in Jesus Christ and his Family, the Church. We should desire to present the Gospel in such a clear, simple and attractive way that people will want to meet Jesus themselves, to change their lives so that they too can think, judge, act and hope like him. Your witness of faith does not need to be long or showy. The underlying aim is to share with others how you’ve encountered Jesus Christ and how this relationship has changed your life. This section contains some guidelines to help you prepare a simple and effective three-minute testimony that can be shared in a variety of situations.

- A. Remember, the forgiveness and life you have received in Baptism, which was strengthened in Confirmation and is nourished through the Eucharist. Anyone who has received these sacraments has these gifts. Some have not yet “opened” these gifts and so they might not be as readily apparent. Your testimony should encourage them to “open” these gifts, “to stir into flame the gifts that God has given” (2 Tm 1:6, NAB). When you are speaking to the unbaptized, know that the Holy Spirit can also work in their lives. He will place on their hearts a desire to receive all that our heavenly Father has intended for us to receive.
- B. Do not be concerned that your testimony be exciting; just that it be a true witness of what God has done in your life – which of course, will be interesting, because God is interesting. You don’t have to be a converted drug-dealing, axe-murdering convict to have an effective testimony.
- C. Be realistic. Do not imply that Christ eliminates all the problems of life, but rather that he enables you to live them out with peace and confidence. He has clearly taught “apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5) and has reassured us, “I am with you always” (Mt 28:20).
- D. Ask the Lord to reveal how he has been present and at work in your life. Ask him to reveal his love for you and ask that he give you wisdom and guidance as you write (James 1:5-6)
- E. Follow a three-point outline:
 - (1) *Life before knowing Christ.*
 - (2) *How you came to know Christ (be specific).*
 - (3) *Life after you received Christ (changes He has made, what He means to you now).*

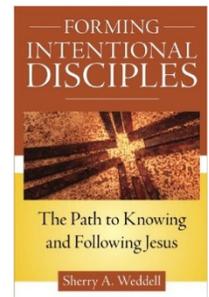
- F. Your testimony might focus on different themes depending on who you are sharing it with.
- (1) *Personal Success or Happiness (your own past viewpoint and now from God's viewpoint),*
 - (2) *Life's Goals (past and present viewpoint)*
 - (3) *Relationships (How God has changed your approach),*
 - (4) *Life Crisis (How God saw you through),*
 - (5) *Purpose in Life (God's personal plan for you),*
 - (6) *Sacramental Life (the difference going to Mass on Sunday makes, daily Mass, regular Confession, Anointing of the Sick, Confirmation)*

Charisms: Gifts to Build up the Church

In order to recognize how we are called to serve and to whom we are being sent, it is helpful to discern the charisms we have received. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, charisms “are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world” (CCC 799).

Forming Intentional Disciples, by Sherry A. Weddell

- “Catholics in the pew must make a conscious choice to know and follow Jesus before they can draw others to him. This work of discipleship lies at the heart of *Forming Intentional Disciples*, a book designed to transform parish life from within.”
- Topics include:
 - Five thresholds of postmodern conversion
 - How to open a conversation about faith and belief
 - How to ask thought-provoking questions and establish trust
 - How to help someone respond to God's call to intentional discipleship
- There is also a group [study guide](#) available as a companion to this book.



Other Related Books

- [Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples](#) is a collection of essays by various authors that cover topics such as:
 - *“The role of intercessory prayer in parish transformation*
 - *How “fireside chats” can help a pastor connect with his parishioners and call them to personal discipleship and mission*
 - *The co-responsibility of lay people and pastors in the work of making disciples*
 - *How one parish successfully fostered a culture of intentional discipleship, and much more”*
- [Fruitful Discipleship: Living the Mission of Jesus in the Church and the Word](#) From the back cover: *How does God's grace change our individual lives, families, neighborhoods, parish communities, and cities?...God has chosen to be present in this world through the faith and obedience of missionary disciples who witness to Jesus Christ and bear abundant fruit. In Fruitful Discipleship, Sherry*
 - *shares what she and her team have learned from helping over 100,000 Catholics of all backgrounds*
 - *identifies and explains 23 distinct charisms and provides wise guidance for discerning and exercising the gifts received in baptism*

- *sheds light on the implications of those gifts for both service and leadership within the Church and in mission to the world*

Called & Gifted Workshops

- Called and Gifted workshops are charism discernment workshops offered through the Siena Institute. See their website at <https://siena.org/called-gifted> for more information.
- Diocese of Crookston parishes have hosted two Called and Gifted Workshops and others are being planned. Contact Bob Noel (bnoel@crookston.org) for more information on the future schedule.

Apologetics: Explaining and Defending the Faith

Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing right, if that should be God's will, than for doing wrong.

1 Peter 3:15-17

What is Apologetics?

There are times when our family, friends, coworkers, people online, or others call into question various teachings of the Catholic Church. Apologetics, at its most basic level, is responding to those questions by explaining and defending the Catholic faith. Apologetics is *not* about winning arguments. Very few people, if any, are 'won' for Christ through trying to prove that you are right and the other person is wrong. At its heart, apologetics seeks to help people understand the truth, beauty, and goodness of what the Church teaches. There are various resources available to assist you in the task of apologetics.

Website: [Catholic Answers](http://www.catholic.com) has answers to many of the common and some uncommon questions about the Catholic faith. It is often a good place to start when you have a particular question. www.catholic.com

Catholic Radio: [Real Presence Radio](http://www.realsense.com) broadcasts many programs that will help you grow in your knowledge of the Catholic faith and the ability to explain it to others. Check their [website](http://www.realsense.com) for local signals and program schedule.

Books that you can give to others

- [*Why We're Catholic: Our Reasons for Faith, Hope, and Love*](#), by Trent Horn
- [*Why I am Catholic \(and you should be too\)*](#)- Brandon Vogt
- [*Truth Be Told: Basics in Catholic Apologetics*](#) by Mark Hart and Joe Cady. This book is geared towards teens in order to help them to better understand the faith.

Books for your own reference, to help you explain the faith to others

- [*Prepare the Way: Overcoming Obstacles to God, the Gospel, and the Church*](#), by Karlo Broussard

- [How to Defend the Faith without Raising Your Voice: Civil Responses to Catholic Hot-Button Issues](#), by Austen Ivereigh and Kathryn Jean Lopez
- [Catholic and Christian](#)- Alan Schreck
- [Handbook of Catholic Apologetics](#)- Peter Kreeft and Tacelli. This is the most academic and dense work of those listed.

The definitive reference source for Catholic doctrine is the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#).

Other Resources

Resources that are used to evangelize

(Resources that do *not* presume the participants have active faith lives.)

- [Alpha in the Catholic Context](#)- Online video series and small participant booklets.
 - Basic, kerygmatic message. Answers objections to faith, etc. There are several versions of this program including ones for adults, youth, and a new film series version.
 - Session 1 - Is There More to Life than This?
 - Session 2 - Who is Jesus?
 - Session 3 - Why Did Jesus Die?
 - Session 4 - How Can I Have Faith?
 - Session 5 - Why and How Do I Pray?
 - Session 6 - Why and How Should I Read the Bible?
 - Session 7 - How Does God Guide us?
 - Session 8 - Who is the Holy Spirit? (Sessions 8 & 9 are in the context of a retreat)
 - Session 9 - What Does the Holy Spirit Do?
 - Session 10 - How Can I Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?
 - Session 11 - How Can I Make the Most of the Rest of My Life?
 - Session 12 - Why and How Should I Tell Others?
 - Session 13 - How Can I Resist Evil?
 - Session 14 - Does God Heal Today?
 - Session 15 - What about the Church?
 - While Alpha is from an Anglican Church, there are adaptations that can be made for a Catholic context.
 - Alpha has been endorsed by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa (Preacher to the Papal Household), Kevin Cotter (formerly FOCUS, now executive director of Amazing Parish), and Fr. Mike Schmitz (Ascension Presents). See other endorsements [here](#).



Convocation of Parish Leaders Prayer

*“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed?
And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?
And how can they hear without someone to preach?
And how can people preach unless they are sent? – Romans 10:13-15*

Heavenly Father,

Pour forth your Holy Spirit to inspire us
with these words from Holy Scripture,
so that we might be strengthened to go forth
and witness to the Gospel in our daily lives
through our words and actions.

Give us the grace
that we might hear the call of the New Evangelization
to deepen our faith, grow in confidence to proclaim the Gospel
and boldly witness to the saving grace of your Son, Jesus Christ.

In moments of hesitation, remind us:

If not me, then who will proclaim the Gospel?
If not now, then when will the Gospel be proclaimed?
If not the truth of the Gospel, then what shall I proclaim?

O Mary, our Immaculate Mother, pray for us.
May the Convocation of Parish Leaders,
inspire us to imitate your example
as the first disciple of your son, Jesus,
who is Lord for ever and ever.

Amen.

Mary, Star of the New Evangelization, pray for us.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux, pray for us.

St. John Paul II, pray for us.

Adapted from the USCCB “Prayer for the New Evangelization”