

“Be A Witness!”

DOCTRINAL ELEMENT

The Church

TOPIC

Evangelization: The Church’s Mission

GOAL

The goal for this session is to introduce young people to the fundamental mission of the Catholic Church and to show how every single one of them are uniquely called to share and participate in that mission.

SECONDARY RELIGION GUIDELINES

(II.I.A.4.b,c.v.e) (II.I.B.2.e)

SCRIPTURE

Great Commission- Mt 28:18-20

Evangelization- Mt 16:15-16; 2 Cor 5:20; Mt 10:7; Rm 10:14-15

Witness- Acts 1:8; Rm 10:9-10; 2 Tm 2:2

CATECHISM

Evangelization- 905, 935, 2472

The Church/Mission- 760, 849-857, 860-861

Witness- 2472, 1816

Christian Life- 2087, 2044, 2028

GOLDEN THREADS

The Incarnation: At the heart of all evangelization is the person of Christ. The task of evangelization is to make one a disciple of Christ.

The Trinity: The Lord’s missionary mandate is grounded ultimately in the eternal love of the Trinity (CCC, 850). It is this love that God desires to draw each and everyone of us into.

The Dignity of the Human Person: God has created each of us out of His incredible love, for the purpose of “sharing in His own life” (CCC, 1). He desires that ALL would share in His life and be in communion with Him. You cannot love God without being drawn into this desire to share His life and love with others. By virtue of their dignity as a human person, each and every individual deserves to hear this Good News and have the opportunity to personally respond to it.

ANNUAL THEME RELEVANCE

Built on Christ. All evangelization is built on Christ, and on His own witness to the truth. His witness was even punctuated by the sacrifice of His own life. We are witnesses to Him, first and foremost, and to the effect He has had on our life.

PROCLAMATION

- Just as God's will is creation and is called "the world," so his intention is the salvation of men, and it is called "the Church." - CCC 760
- God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth . . . Salvation is found in the truth . . . the Church, to whom this truth has been entrusted, must go out to meet their desire, so as to bring them the truth. - CCC 851
- The whole Church is apostolic . . . she is "sent out" into the whole world. All members of the Church share in this mission. - CCC 863

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- Lay people also fulfill their prophetic mission by evangelization, "that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life." - CCC 905
- In order that the message of salvation can show the power of its truth and radiance before men, it must be authenticated by the witness of the life of Christians. "The witness of a Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have great power to draw men to the faith and to God." - CCC 2044
- The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it. - CCC 1816
- “The task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church... It is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize.” - *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

- Evangelism Linebacker
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvYFvxl1dcY>
- St. Paul Rap (*Beware: Highly corny, but has a good message, and the corny-ness could work with the right group of teens*)
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEKn1ulc750&NR=1>
- Lifehouse: Everything Skit (*Can be used as a tool to evangelize*)
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyheJ480LYA&feature=related>

OTHER RESOURCES

- *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*On Evangelization in the Modern World*)
- *Redemptoris Missio* (*Mission of the Redeemer*)
- *Redemptor hominis* (*Redeemer of Man*)
- Cultivation Ministries – a number of resources on evangelization and sharing your faith, including the book “Positively Dangerous” and “I am E3 Cards”
 - <http://www.cultivationministries.com/home/resources/>

GATHER

Icebreaker- *Get Lost* (see appendix at the end of the session)

This activity can be used in a fun way to start the meeting, but can also be used to transition into the topic for the night. Imagine if the Church started out by telling people to “get lost” like we just did in this activity! Yet, as we see in the game, many times in groups people can be rejected, for one reason or another. The Church itself is a “group”, but the Church would have never grown if she rejected people. In fact, the Church has had as one of its primary reasons to exist inviting more and more people to join her!

Opening Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit, and fill the hearts of your faithful,
and kindle in them the fire of Your Divine Love.
Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created,
and You shall renew the face of the earth.

Oh God, Who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructed the hearts of the faithful,
Grant that, by the same Spirit,
we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation.
We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

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OR

Mary, Star of the New Evangelization

Holy Mary, star of the new evangelization,
make us the light of the world.

We receive Christ in the Eucharist;
help us build the Kingdom in the world.

Teach us whatever He tells us.
May our study of His life lead us to love Him,
and our love for Him lead us to imitate Him.

If we are what we should be,
we will set the world ablaze and affect the culture.

We ask your intercession to make this so,
through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

EXPLANATION

(a PowerPoint presentation would be helpful to display quotes for all teens to read)

When you hear the word “Evangelism” what do you think of? (some responses may be good, some may be bad...televangelists, people on the corner screaming to repent, etc...)

Is Evangelism something that Catholics are supposed to participate in?

Have the teens read and reflect upon Romans 10:13-15, “For 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? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring (the) Good News!””

Next have the teens read Mt. 28:18-20, “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. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

The deepest identity of the Church is to evangelize. That is why the Church exists...she exists in order to evangelize.

The Church, an expression of God’s plan, is the instrument of His desire to save all men.

In order to be saved, we must find the truth. God has entrusted that truth to the Church. Outside of the Church there is no salvation (CCC 846).

Because the Church has been entrusted with the truth, she has the duty, the “apostolic mission”, to share it with all men.

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EVERY lay member of the Church shares in this mission: by keeping the faith, by living the faith, and by boldly professing it to others.

This is our Church and her mission; this is her deepest identity. And because we are members of her, it is OUR identity and mission, too.

What can you do to Evangelize?

1. Walk the walk

What does it mean to walk the walk? How do we both evangelize and prepare to evangelize to those we encounter in our day-to-day lives? Hopefully the answer is somewhat obvious; we live as Christians and walk with Christ in our lives. This means specifically: praying, fasting, regularly participating in the sacraments, leading a moral lifestyle and digging ever deeper into our faith and Scripture.

Prayer, both personal and communal, is key to any Christian life. Have you ever been on a long trip? What happened as the day or days went on? Did you get hungry? Did you run low on fuel? Obviously you did. You had to stop driving and take time to refuel. This is prayer! It is essential that we pray – that we take time to sit before our Creator, the focus of our life as Christians, and refuel. Whether our prayer is offering up intentions, thanksgiving, asking for help through struggles or simply focusing on Christ, we are refueled to begin the journey again.

The Sacraments are another source of fuel for us on our journey. Sacraments are those outward signs, instituted by Christ, to give us grace and strength for the road ahead. The most important source of fuel is daily or weekly Mass. The Church professes that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life (LG 11).” As the source and summit of Christian life, all the other sacraments and ministries (including evangelization) are bound together and found in the Eucharist.

We should all be trying our best to lead a moral life with Christ as our ultimate example. This doesn’t mean we have to be perfect. We are human, after all, and therefore make mistakes. The important thing is to admit that you have made a mistake, confess that mistake, and move forward trying your best not to repeat it.

Living our lives with Christ as our ultimate example means that we live as He lived. Did Christ live one way with His family and another with His disciples? Do you? One question to ask yourself is, “If Christians were on trial, would you be convicted?” In other words, is your faith so much a part of your daily life that your friends and others know that you are a Christian?

How easy is it to remember the lyrics or tune to your favorite song? Now, can you remember the chapter and verse of your favorite scripture passage? One of the best ways we can prepare to talk to others about our faith and evangelize is to learn our faith inside and out; know what the Church teaches and why. This means continually learning a little more about the Bible as well. Make it fun and help each other learn why we do what we do and believe what we believe as Catholics. Ask me or Father _____ about a question you might have. Just continue to ask questions and learn about our faith.

2. Live your faith joyfully

-Ghandi, "I like your Christ...I do not like your Christians"

Do we live in joy because of our faith or is our faith just a bunch of rules or things that we can’t do? Are we an example of Christ to others? It is important for us to live joyfully in our faith and show that to others. This shows that we live in freedom and joy (a product of living by the virtues of Faith, Hope and Love); the Gospel really is the “Good News.” How do our

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everyday actions or the way we approach our “celebrations” invite others to be interested or excited about our faith?

3. "Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words." – St. Francis of Assisi

This quote is sometimes used as a cop-out, meaning that simply living your life in a good manner is enough to witness to the Gospel. However, there are many times that we need to use words to proclaim that Jesus Christ is the reason for our joy and our way of life.

We all know really “nice” people who are not the least bit religious. When we make decisions, do we explain the reason for our decision (Jesus Christ), or do we just let people make their own assumptions?

"There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are not proclaimed" (*Evangeliu Nuntiandi*, no. 22)...we need to USE WORDS!

4. Evangelize your friends

Do you talk to your friends about faith? Do you talk to them about your priorities and why you go to Church? Have you ever invited a friend to go to Church with you? It is amazing the positive impact we can have on each other when we simply talk about positive influences in our own lives. An example of this would be talking about what a great time you had at a youth gathering or retreat. Get your friends involved and invite them.

Pray for and with your friends. Saint Monica (mother of St. Augustine) is a great example of the impact prayer can have on the lives of those we care about. Say grace at meals before you eat and talk to your friends about why you do it. These are all great examples, though not easy ones, of what we can do to evangelize our friends. Honestly, it doesn't have to be anything sinister or sneaky; we just live our lives, pray for God's grace and spread the joy to others that God gives to us.

5. Evangelize your parents/family

You may ask what on heaven or earth can I do to evangelize at home? Believe it or not, you can do a great deal. All it takes is suggesting to your family that you pray before you eat or spend some quality time together without the television on. Maybe your family would go for praying a rosary together once a week or reading a book of the Bible together.

Another form of evangelization at home is simply doing things for others without being asked or showing your appreciation for your siblings and parents. Life and the Gospel happen around the small things in life that we do; the Gospel is not just contained in the big events (baptisms, confirmations, first communions, marriages), but in joyfully saying, “I love you” and “good morning” to your family.

6. Witness in public

Similar to witnessing and evangelizing at home, it is important that we witness to the world that we are Christians. As an old hymn goes, “They will know we are Christians by our love...” As I said before, it doesn't always have to be big things that are the strongest witness to people around us. You can evangelize better by helping somebody in need at your school or inviting “the new kid” to join you and your friends the next time you hang out. Again, it can be just as simple as saying a prayer before you eat a meal out or holding the door for an elderly person to go through first.

The key to evangelization is learning about your faith, talking about what you learn and then putting it into practice in your life to be an example to others.

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APPLICATION

Finish the night with the Mission Game (*see appendix at the end of the session*)

Optional Additional Activity: Hot Seat

This is best done in smaller groups. If you have a large group of teens, divide them up into groups of 6-8 teens. Each group will pick one person in the group to be in the “hot seat”. This person will have to answer questions from the rest of the students. The questions can be about any aspect of the faith, or about witnessing to their faith. (e.g., Do you really believe Jesus walked on water? Do you believe He rose from the dead? Why?) The questions are meant to be the kind of questions they may actually get from friends. Can they handle being in the “hot seat”?

SEND

Summary: What does this have to do with Jesus?

At the heart of the Church is Jesus, and the Church has the mission she has because it was the mission of Jesus. The desire to save all men was the desire of Jesus, the desire of the Trinity. And Jesus established the Church to carry on this mission that He started. Every single person shares in this mission, and is caught up into it as they live out their life of faith. We are ALL called to be witnesses to it!

Closing Prayer

Prayer for Evangelization

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!

CONSIDERATIONS FOR HISPANIC YOUTH MINISTRY

In order to effectively evangelize a person, it is essential to have an understanding of the culture that the person is a part of. “Inculturation of the Gospel is a process that brings the

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transforming power of the Gospel to touch each person in their hearts and cultures at their deepest levels” (NDC p. 82). Hispanic youth are a completely unique “culture” in themselves and require special attention. It is very common for Hispanic youth to feel a great tension or “choque” between their family life and the dominant culture they participate in outside the home. If we want to evangelize Hispanic youth, we need to try to enter into their reality of uncertainty, of fear, of feelings of being different and the struggles of being immigrants or children of immigrants. If we want Hispanic youth to evangelize their family and peers, we must first help them to feel comfortable and confident with who they are in Jesus. We must build them up in God’s promises and love if they are to go out and share the Gospel with others.

Biography

Jim Beckman has been involved with youth ministry and evangelization of teens for more than 20 years. He graduated from the Franciscan University and has been in various roles of leadership of national youth ministry ever since. Jim has served as a host of the Steubenville summer Youth Conferences for more than 20 years. He has built solid and thriving youth ministry programs in several parishes over the years. Jim is the Executive Director of ImpactCenter, a Youth Minister mentoring and consulting ministry, and is the Director of Outreach for the Augustine Institute in Denver. He and his wife, Meg, and their family live in Highlands Ranch, CO.

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Appendix 1 “Get Lost”

From the “Creative Youth Ideas” web page –

http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/blog/icebreakers/get_lost_2.html#more

Description

This game provides an opportunity to mix the group up and for them to share information about themselves in a non-threatening way while having fun. In this elimination game, people are grouped into groups of three and then one person in every group which meets a certain characteristic is asked to “Get Lost.” Everyone who had to leave must quickly find another group and form groups of three again. The last group to form is eliminated.

Resources

None

Preparation

Prepare a list of criteria. You can choose from the list below or create your own:

- Name closest to letter "A"
- Name closest to letter "Z"
- Neither the youngest nor the oldest in a group.
- Oldest
- Youngest
- Has the most colorful socks
- Has the oldest living grandparent
- Has the most cousins
- Has the least number of pets
- Has the most pets
- Has the largest pet.
- Is the tallest
- Is the shortest
- Has the longest hair
- Has the shortest hair
- Has the most traffic tickets
- Has been a member of this group for the longest time
- Newest member of this group
- Has been to the most foreign countries
- Longest fingernail
- Spent the most money today
- Has played on the most sports teams
- Can do the most one-armed push-ups
- Tallest Person
- Longest eyelashes
- Smallest belt
- Highest numbered Street Address
- Biggest Purse / or wallet
- Highest Serial Number on currency

- Has the shortest fingernails
- Has the biggest foot.
- Has the smallest foot.
- Has the longest finger
- Has the darkest skin tone.
- Has the smallest nose
- Lives farthest from this meeting place
- Lives on the highest floor
- Born the Farthest away
- Longest last name
- Biggest shoe size
- Lives the closest to this place
- has been on the most vacations in the past year
- Has the most siblings
- Birthday closest to today
- Shortest Person
- Youngest Baby brother/ sister

- Most jewelry
- Least jewelry
- Longest earrings
- Wearing the most blue
- Oldest
- Neatest handwriting
- Messiest handwriting
- Loudest
- Most quiet
- Has darkest color notebook
- Most rings
- Biggest hands
- Has most books
- Whistles the loudest
- Longest Paper Airplane Throw

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What to Do

1. Form groups of 3-7 people. It's ok if groups are not equal as long as there is a minimum of three in each group and they are balanced as closely as possible.
2. Based upon different criteria, at a given signal, one person in each group will be told to "get lost."
3. Ask them to introduce themselves to each person in the group and then determine which person in their group meets the specified characteristic.
4. Allow time for the groups to introduce themselves and determine who best fits the given criteria. You might want to ask the groups to raise their hands when they have identified the person so that you know when everyone is ready.
5. Explain to the groups that on your signal the identified person must move to another group. You will say “One, Two, Three!!!” and then all the groups will say “Get Lost!!”
6. Then every group must get ONE new member to replace the one they lost.
7. The last group to reform is eliminated.
8. Continue to play with new criteria for getting lost until only group survives. Then you tell this trio that for being so competitive that they must all "Get Lost!"

Variation

Give them an additional question to share while introducing themselves such as a favorite ice cream, a discussion thought, etc.

Taking It to the Next Level

In each round of this game there were a lot of people who were rejected. Among them some were even eliminated. Whenever people form groups this will always be the case. There will also be those group members that are very popular and those that no one seems to want. There will always be selection and rejection when groups are formed. It's part of life. It's of great benefit to be around like minded people. It's good to be surrounded by people that inspire you and challenge you to grow and become your best. Yet it is also good to have people who are different, people with a different perspective, people with skills and gifts you don't possess. The question is what is the best way to handle the selection process?

- Have you even seen someone get rejected from a group? On what basis were they rejected?
- What are some of the reasons that people get rejected from a group?
- Have you ever been told to “get lost”? Been rejected from a group?
- Why? What was the basis for your rejection?
- How did it make you feel? Did it seem fair? How did you respond?
- Is it wrong to want to choose your friends? Why or why not?
- Does bad company always corrupt good character?
- If everyone were exactly like you, what would the world be like? Would there be anything missing in the world?
- Are there ever legitimate reasons to be selective about a group? When? If so, how can you be selective yet also seek the best for everyone?
- How can you find a balance of putting together the best group for a situation, task, or specific purpose, yet also making sure that no one is rejected? Can it be done? How should it be done?

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Action Points

- What is one way that you can become more accepting of others?
- Identify several specific people that you need around you to help you to achieve your goals and dreams in life? What can you offer to them in return? Commit yourself to be that kind of person.
- Find someone in the group whom you don't know very well, but whom you would like to know and make an effort to reach out to them. You never know what undiscovered gifts you might find in others.
- What is one way you can personally bring out the best in others, even when they may not be part of your chosen group?

Possible Applications / jump off points to spiritual discussions

Tell youth they are all "LOST", but in God's grace, we are all found! Grace is actually an "undeserved gift." In the book of Romans we discover that all men are "lost" because of our sinful nature (Romans 3:23, 6:23). Like some of the characteristics in the game, part of our sinful nature we have no control over... it was passed down as a result of Adam and Eve's fall. But other aspects of our sinful nature are due to choices we made so that we are without excuse. But through Grace, God forgives our sin so that we are no longer lost, but saved! Instead of getting lost, let's "get saved" through God's grace.

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Appendix 2 The Mission Game

[Begin this activity with the following explanation]

“Thanks for joining us for the two-year mission to this Island _____
(call it whatever you want).

Your mission is to take this island for Christ and you have two years to see what you can accomplish. We do not know too much about the inhabitants of this island except for a few small, but very important details.”

“There are basically three types of people who are on this island and can be classified as the following:

1. There are people who are friendly and speak your language they love outsiders.
2. There are people who do not care either way about outsiders – some speak your language and some do not.
3. There are people who hate us, who hate what you stand for, do not like outsiders and do not speak your language.

Knowing these things about the people of this island – you are now to come up with a two year strategic plan to take this island for Christ. What are you going to do and how are you going to do it? What are the reasons behind the various things you have decided to do?”

[Give them 20 min. or so to come up with their strategic plan]

[Process with each group what they have decided to do and why. Then have someone write down on a dry erase board all of their ideas of all the groups. You will refer to this at the end of the activity.]

“Now that you have your plan and have enacted it for your first year – you have made some real progress. By God’s grace many have converted to Christ. But the king or representative of the people who hate us have come to us saying that unless you leave now we are going to torture you and kill you. Who do you think you are coming here with your ideas of religion and imposing this on us? Who do you think you are? Unless you leave we will begin killing you!”

“Now you have been at this one year and you still have one year to go. So you must have a consensus in answering this question as a group: Do you stay or do you go - knowing there is a death threat hanging over you?”

[Give them some time to process this question – telling them that there is no wrong answer except not having a reason for their decision. Then ask each group what they have decided and why.]

[Finally tell them:] “OK – now you have been at this two years and great progress has been made many have come to know and experience the Living Jesus Christ in their lives. You have started to make disciples. Disciples who are now not just living like Christ but are also now just beginning to evangelize. The people who do not care – many of them now care!

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There are fewer on the fence – but some have come to hate us as well. The King of the people who hate us put a death sentence on all of us and has made good on his threat. _____ (pick someone from your group) has just been martyred because he converted the Kings daughter and they were engaged to marry. He was beheaded in the most cruel way possible.”

“Now the big question is this: You have been there two years, your missionary commitment is over, many have been converted, disciples are beginning to carry out the work of evangelization – but there is still much more that needs to be accomplished. There are many who still have not heard the Good News. Your disciples are still in need of your experience and know how. And you have this very real death threat over you. In light of this scripture: *[Read Mark 8:34 – 38 out loud]*

Do you stay or do you go? This is an individual question. Not a group question. I want you to come up here to the board and put yourself on the island or on the boat telling us all if you personally are going to stay or going to go. There is no right or wrong answer except you must be able to articulate why you have decided to do what you have chosen to do.”

[Give them a marker to have them put a stick figure on the board – then to articulate why they are going to stay or go]

[Listen to their answers – many will stay having a martyr’ attitude – which is great. Others will go mostly because they feel their commitment is over and God will now call them to another work. Both ideas are fine and all show a determination to serve our Lord. Mention that is remarkable that so many would give their lives for giving away the Gospel]

“BUT, Let’s look at this island – not as some game or scenario! Let’s look at this as your high school campus, your family or your work place. On this campus of _____ there are people that are friendly to you and your message. Many could care less who you are. And you will also find those who hate you – asking you where you get off imposing your beliefs on them. In the activity with the Island, some of you said that you would be willing to give your own life for this – shedding your blood for the Gospel. But, are you willing to do the same thing for your school campus? Sometimes it’s easier to shed our blood for Christ than it is to shed our reputation. What will it cost you?”

“When we talk about evangelization on this campus – you came up with great ideas to do just that. Look at this list of ideas you came up with in your strategic plans on how to take the island for Christ. There are some real similarities to how you can take your campus for Christ. How can you implement those things?”

“You can learn the language, learn the culture, invite people over for meals or serve people in ways they have a need to be served. You can build relationships with them – so that they will listen to you when you share about Christ and how to live your life for Him!”