

ENCOUNTER THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

SET THE WORLD ABLAZE



Formation Guidelines for Evangelization Teams by Parish/LPA/Region

Purpose of an Evangelization Team

An Evangelization Team is needed so that there are some people in a parish, cluster, or LPA group solely dedicated to the efforts of Evangelization. With so many other important tasks of parish life, evangelization is too often put on the backburner. “Asked whether spreading the faith was a high priority of their parishes...only 6 percent of Catholics” responded in the affirmative. “Asked whether they sponsored local evangelistic activities...only 3 percent of Catholic parishes” responded that they did (Weddell 51). These statistics show that evangelistic efforts will not happen on their own. Thus it is important that a group form to advocate for the work of evangelization.

Although Evangelization cannot be accomplished solely by starting a new committee on a parish or LPA level, it is necessary to have some people in the parish(es) spearhead efforts to make sure that Evangelization is on the forefront of parish in-reach and out-reach. This team will serve as a constant reminder for the people of the parish of the true goal of evangelization. Through collaboration with parishioners, staff, and ministries of the parish the team will be able to weave in the goal of Evangelization into all aspects of parish life. As each parish has an Evangelization team, they will also be able to connect and support with the teams from other parishes, clusters, and/or LPA's across the diocese to share ideas and resources.

What does an Evangelization Team Do

Although the team will be making efforts for Evangelization, their broader goal is to start to advocate for evangelization on all levels of parish life. Every Catholic needs to be aware that they are called to be an evangelist at all times. Old patterns of thinking and acting need to be formed into new ways that will enable the Holy Spirit move more freely as the converter of hearts.

This team will help set a vision for evangelization:

- They will pray.
- They will be formed.
- They will explain the need for an Evangelization and what that means for their local community.
- They will spearhead new efforts for welcoming returning Catholics.
- They will advocate for Evangelization within all aspects of the life of the parish, remembering that every parishioner has a role to play.

Characteristics of Team Members (from Disciples Called to Witness 17)

Use this list to identify who might make a good team member. People on the team should already be living a vibrant Catholic faith.

- Deep love of Church
- Mature prayer life
- Joy-filled witness
- Willingness and ability to share their faith story with others
- Welcoming
- Time to commit

Different Models of an Evangelization Team

There are many models of what the team could look like. Much will depend on the size of your parish, number of parishes in a cluster, or if you are working with another parish in your LPA group. The pastor and staff should play an integral part no matter the model.

The size of the team will vary depending on the parish, cluster, or LPA. The team may be small or the team may be large. A medium size parish may have about 7-8 committed members. The smallest parishes may consider having everyone in the parish be a part of Evangelization Team.

Because the work of advocating for evangelization is so critical, it requires a dedicated time commitment. The team should be prepared to meet as often as every two weeks for the first few months. After that, the team will need to meet once a month to continue its work.

Below are some suggested models of Evangelization Teams:

Model Option A

The pastor and or staff leader can invite a few parishioners who they have prayerfully discerned to be part of this new team. This group can then function outside the existing ministries and help advocate for Evangelization. The benefit of this group is having new people who are not weighed down by other responsibilities. They will be able to focus all their efforts on the work of evangelization. The downfall may be a lack of quick connection or information about various ministries.

Model Option B

Invite a representative from every ministry in the parish, to form this new team. It is important that each group or ministry in the parish has a representative on the team. Everyone is called to take up the call of Evangelization, so everyone should have representation. This cannot be the work of a few. The benefit of this is having every group have a representative. The downfall might be that these people are already invested in a ministry and may have a difficult time giving more time and or seeing past their own ministry.

Model Option C

Make an existing parish wide team Evangelization Team. This group might be the parish staff, or pastoral council, or another advisory group already in existence. The benefit is that this group already works together for the good of the parish; the downfall may be that this group will have a difficult time seeing past it's current role.

Formation of the Team

Once a team has been selected, they must be formed. Elements for consideration for formation are the following:

- Understanding what Evangelization is
- Study and Discussion of "Disciples Called to Witness: Evangelization"
 - <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/disciples-called-to-witness/upload/Disciples-Called-to-Witness-5-30-12.pdf>
- Survey of the parish for what efforts in evangelization are being made and need to happen
- How to create a plan for parish-wide implementation
- Identifying areas of first contact within already existing parish ministries
- Being Hospitable in words and actions: how interaction with others is an important component of evangelization
- Deciding if a specific program will be helpful
- Selecting and implementing a specific program
- Developing a measurable success tool

Evangelization Coordinator Position Description

Throughout the Diocese each parish or cluster of parishes is being asked to form a team that dedicated to Evangelization. The guidelines for these teams have been put forth elsewhere (Formation Guidelines for Evangelization Teams) but an important position needs to be clarified, that of Evangelization Coordinator. For each team it will be helpful to establish one member as the Coordinator to guide the team and to communicate and work with the pastor. This individual might be part of the pastoral council or a new person could be asked to serve in this role separate from a council. Evangelization Coordinator will need to be someone who can reach out both to active parishioners as well as “inactive” parishioners. In order to lead others to Christ and to assist them in growing in their faith, the Coordinator would need to be a person with a strong faith, love of the Church, willingness to share their faith, and time to commit to the efforts of evangelization.

While the role of the Coordinator might differ from location to location the basic responsibilities of the position would be the same. They would be expected to:

- Coordinate Evangelization Team in whatever form it becomes for the particular parish.
- Coordinate Evangelization efforts within each of the different ministries that the parish offers.
- Work with the Pastor and the Pastoral Council to implement the Diocesan Plan.
- Help to adapt the plan so that it would work for the particular parishes needs.
- Set goals for Evangelization Team and coordinate the necessary plans to achieve those goals.