

# Evangelization *Reflection*

For Parish Teams

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Diocese of St. Augustine

Office of Evangelization

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# Reflection *Overview*

The following is a reflection for considering evangelization spirituality, practices, and opportunities in the parish. Parish teams should read through the questions and discuss their thoughts openly together. This could be done in one session, or over the course of a few meetings.

The goal is for the questions to serve as a springboard for honest self-reflection and strategic thinking.

<b>Guiding Principles</b>	<b>2</b>	This section covers some essential principles to consider as you move through the reflection questions.
<b>The Missionary Mindset</b>	<b>3</b>	This section poses reflection questions for personal formation among parish team leadership and unity in mission and vision.
<b>Know Jesus</b>	<b>4</b>	This section looks at evangelization opportunities for the beginning stages of conversion: pre-evangelization and proclaiming the gospel.
<b>Love Jesus</b>	<b>5</b>	These questions reflect on evangelization opportunities for beginning and growing discipleship.
<b>Share Jesus</b>	<b>6</b>	These questions reflect on evangelization opportunities for preparing for mission, as well as living missionary discipleship.
<b>Next Steps and Further Help</b>	<b>7</b>	A simple plan for next steps, focusing on personal and intentional investment in those already within your sphere of influence.

# Guiding Principles

Keep the following essential concepts in mind as you begin the reflection.

## ONE-ON-ONE

Parish transformation can only come about if there is first individual transformation through missionary disciples sharing life with one another. Programs are only effective in so far as they equip disciples to begin sharing life and faith with one another outside of the program.

## START WITH YOU

Individual transformation necessitates a “return to the source”: personal encounter with Jesus Christ and his Church by which we know, love, and share Him. This must start with us.

## START SMALL

Individual transformation can never be taken for granted. It will likely be necessary to initially “return to the source” in our parish activities by emphasizing pre-evangelization and Gospel proclamation even for those already regularly attending the parish.

There are many helpful models of the discipleship process, and we encourage you to prayerfully consider the model that resonates the most with you, your parish leadership, and parishioners. For this assessment we propose the following diagram as a simple vision for missionary formation. It is based off of Evangelical Catholic’s “Baseball Diamond”.



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# Mission Mindset

Begin by prayerfully reflecting on the following...

## Philippians 2:1-4

*“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

### Leadership Awareness and Spirituality

“But whoever would be great among you must be your servant.” - Matthew 20:26

- Do **I** have a living, growing, faithful, visible and personal relationship with Christ?
- Do **we**, as a parish leadership team, have a living, growing, faithful, visible and personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
- Do our pastor, clergy, staff, and parishioners trust one another in such a way that they are comfortable with disagreement, advice, input, and correction?
- Do I believe we have a personal responsibility to evangelize through both deed and word?
- Do we as a parish leadership team meet and pray together regularly?
- Do we live out unity as a leadership team?
- Are we authentically concerned for one another as a leadership team?
- Do we sacrifice for one another as coworkers with joy and patience?

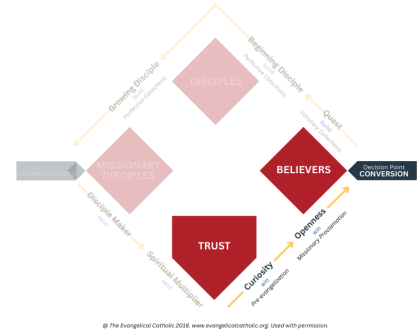
### United Mission and Vision

“Be of one mind.” - Philippians 2:2

- What is our parish mission and vision?
- Does our parish leadership team have a consistent understanding of the mission and vision? Are they bought in? (*What is your understanding?*)
- Is it a “shared” mission? Is it the result of real intentional cooperation between pastor, staff, and members of the parish?
- Is each member of our leadership team able to articulate how their particular role fits into the mission and vision of the parish? (*If so, please do so now*).
- Do parishioners know and understand our parish’s mission and vision? Do they take personal ownership of it?
- Is our mission a “living” mission? Do we refer back to it in all of our planning, prayer, and discernment?
- In what ways do we as a staff regularly gather to revisit our mission and vision to ensure unity?

# Know Jesus

Begin by prayerfully reflecting on the following...



## Go and Make Disciples, 19

*“Evangelization happens when the word of Jesus speaks to people’s hearts and minds. Needing no trickery or manipulation, evangelization can happen only when people accept the Gospel freely, as the “good news” it is meant to be, because of the power of the gospel message and the accompanying grace of God.”*

### Pre-Evangelization

“Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.” - Colossians 3:19

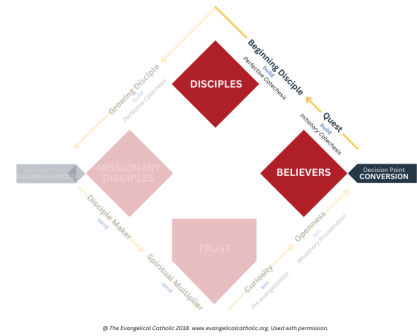
- What opportunities to build trust exist in our parish and community?
- What opportunities exist that we have overlooked? Where do people “slip through the cracks”?
- How are we equipping ourselves and others to address people’s questions and curiosity about Christianity in a relational way?
- Do we see every touchpoint with someone as an opportunity to invite them deeper into conversion, **and** are we personally equipped to accompany them through that process?
- In what ways are we practically equipping ourselves and others to accompany people from curiosity to openness?
- What is someone’s first contact with our parish like?
- Are there specific strategies in place to reach those who have drifted away from the Church?
- What role does hospitality play in your parish’s approach to pre-evangelization?
- When new people visit our parish, especially those who may not be living in accordance with the Church, do we have a missionary mindset that is reflected in the way we encounter them?
- Do we, as a community and as individuals, live the Gospel as if it were truly *good news*?

### Proclaiming the Gospel

“Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.” - Mark 16:15

- Where/how is the Gospel proclaimed **with words** in our parish?
- How do you ensure that the message of the Gospel is effectively communicated to parishioners?
- Are homilies kerygmatic, theological, approachable, and practical? Are they designed to address the people who actually attend the given mass?
- How are we providing opportunities for parishioners to share their faith story with one another?
- When/how are we preparing people to articulate the gospel in a personal way?
- Have we, as a team, taken time to share our stories with one another? Do we feel comfortable doing so?

# Love Jesus



Begin by prayerfully reflecting on the following...

## Redemptoris Mission, 26

*“From the outset, conversion is expressed in faith which is total and radical, and which neither limits nor hinders God’s gift. At the same time, it gives rise to a dynamic and lifelong process, which demands a continual turning away from ‘life according to the flesh’ to life according to the Spirit.’ Conversion means accepting, by a personal decision, the saving sovereignty of Christ and becoming his disciple.”*

### Questing Together

“We have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is the Saviour of the world.” - John 4:19

- How does your parish support individuals in their journey towards conversion to Christ?
- Are there ongoing resources and support for those who have recently been initiated into the faith?
- How are we equipping our parishioners to accompany people into the Church? Do we accompany them?
- How do you foster a sense of belonging and community for newcomers to the parish?
- Do we utilize OCIA to effectively bring people into the full life of the parish? Do our parishioners and leadership take intentional time to grow in relationship with those entering into the Church?
- Do we have a spirit of truly preparing people for a sacramental encounter with Jesus and His Church?
- What parish activities and opportunities exist to fulfill the Six Tasks of Catechesis?
  - (1) Knowledge of the Faith, (2) Sacramental/Liturgical Formation, (3) Moral Formation, (4) Prayer Formation, (5) Communal Formation, (6) Missionary Formation

### Forming Beginning Disciples

“Continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it.”

- 2 Tim 3:14

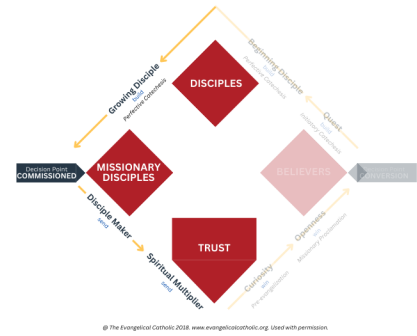
- Do we, as a parish team, share life with one another outside of work or parish activities?
- How do we, as a parish team, accompany others in their journey of faith?
- Do we plan parish activities with the art of accompaniment in mind?
- What opportunities in our parish exist for scripture study? Do we have opportunities to study scripture with multiple entry levels?
- How are we inspiring and equipping parishioners to read scripture/pray at home and with each other?
- Do we cultivate a mindset of accompaniment, where our parishioners share life with one another outside of the parish?

# Share *Jesus*

Begin by prayerfully reflecting on the following...

## Evangelii Gaudium, 26

*Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are "disciples" and "missionaries", but rather that we are always "missionary disciples".*



### Growing into Missionary Disciples

"And how can they preach unless they are sent?" - Romans 10:15

- How are we theologically forming disciples in our parish for mission?
- How are we practically forming disciples in our parish for mission?
- Where in our parish is the greatest opportunity for missionary formation?
- What is missing from our discipleship formation?
  - Do our disciples have the desire, but not the skills? Do they have the skills, but not the desire? Do they have both skills and desire, but not the opportunity?
- How are we equipping disciples in our parish to discern their own personal apostolate?
- How do you encourage and equip parishioners to take on leadership roles in the faith formation of others?
- How are we preparing disciples for the "messiness" of mission and the patience, humility, and courage required to live mission well?
- How do we prepare disciples to articulate the faith in a personal way that is accessible and understandable to the uninitiated?

### Living as Missionary Disciples

"We were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves." - 1 Thess 2:8

- What opportunities exist in our parish for adults and youth to go on mission, both at home and abroad?
- Do disciples in our parish invite and accompany others into their own lives of faith?
- Do disciples in our parish invite and accompany others to mass?
- Do we as a parish maintain a presence in our local community? Are we visible and accessible?
- In what ways are we striving to build awareness of our parish in our community?
- What is our outward facing communication like? Is our website neat, up-to-date and easily navigable? Are mass times clearly displayed?
- Take a second look at the "Pre-Evangelization" questions. How are we providing a bridge between "missionary preparation" and "pre-evangelization"?



# Next Steps & *further help*



## Start Small

Look at who is already within your sphere of influence. Consider their level of formation.



## Invest Personally

Begin intentionally investing in them through regular prayer and one-on-one accompaniment.



## Don't Rush It

Don't rush their formation, take the necessary time to form them well and to truly share life with them.



## Mission Together

Equip them to begin doing the same in their particular spheres of influence.

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## Further Help

This assessment is by no means comprehensive, it intends merely to start the process of critical and strategic thinking in planning evangelization.

For further help, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Evangelization for more resources, on-site assistance, and consultation.