



Chris Stefanick

Evangelization

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SECTION 1

Introduction

CHAPTER 1: The Main Thing

CHAPTER 2: The Problem and the Solution

SECTION OVERVIEW:

As a parish leader, you have the most important job in the world. The entire story of salvation history, the Gospel message, has been handed to you to make present in the lives of those in your parish and community. Even in a world that seems to have lost its way, the Gospel has not lost its relevancy and impact. However, for us to embark on the “New Evangelization” that St. John Paul II called us to, with its new expression, ardor, and methods, we will have to learn to regather our parish communities around this central mission of evangelization.

In this foundational Revive course, we will first learn the content of this message that changes the world and how to express it to change the hearts of those around us. We will unpack the seven habits of highly effective evangelists, as well as disciplines that we need to develop in our personal lives to become more impactful in sharing this mission. Finally, we will learn a few practical, “stubbornly simple” methods for doing the work of evangelization in our parishes.

Today, the obstacles to evangelization are unlike any others we have faced in history. We live in an era where evangelization means trying to share the Good News with people who worship nothing at all. However, in the midst of all this, the Good News is still Good News because the Gospel, which is Jesus Christ, solves every problem in the human heart.

NOTES:



LET'S GO FURTHER:

This section of the PDF is a series of reflections, challenges, and action-provoking next steps to take based off of what was learned in the chapters. Take the time to really think, "So now what should I do with this information to inspire renewal in my parish?" These should be reflected upon individually and then shared and discussed afterward if you are in a group setting. If you are not, complete the exercise and begin to think about who you could invite into conversation about what you've discovered and how you as an individual could inspire parish-wide change through collaboration.

1. Do you know how important your job as a parish leader is?

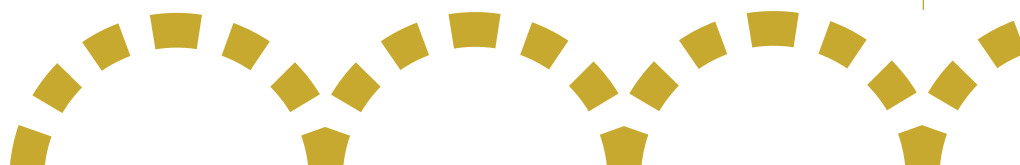
Take a moment to imagine the people in your pews. Just like in Chris's story of the woman whose heart was broken due to an abortion, many of them are wounded, lost, and unsure of why they are there.

Picture their faces, their stories, maybe even their hurts. Now imagine what could happen to those faces, stories, and hurts if they encounter the Good News through your parish staff. Imagine the transformation that could take place, just like in Chris's story.

What could happen to them and to your parish if they knew that they were redeemed and forgiven? Worthy and chosen? Beloved?

Enter into prayer, and bring those faces and souls with you. Say a Hail Mary for them.

2. What are some habits, procedures, or programs in your parish community that naturally spread the Good News and bring life to those who walk in your doors? Where are you evangelizing right now? Write it down. If you aren't sure, find out.

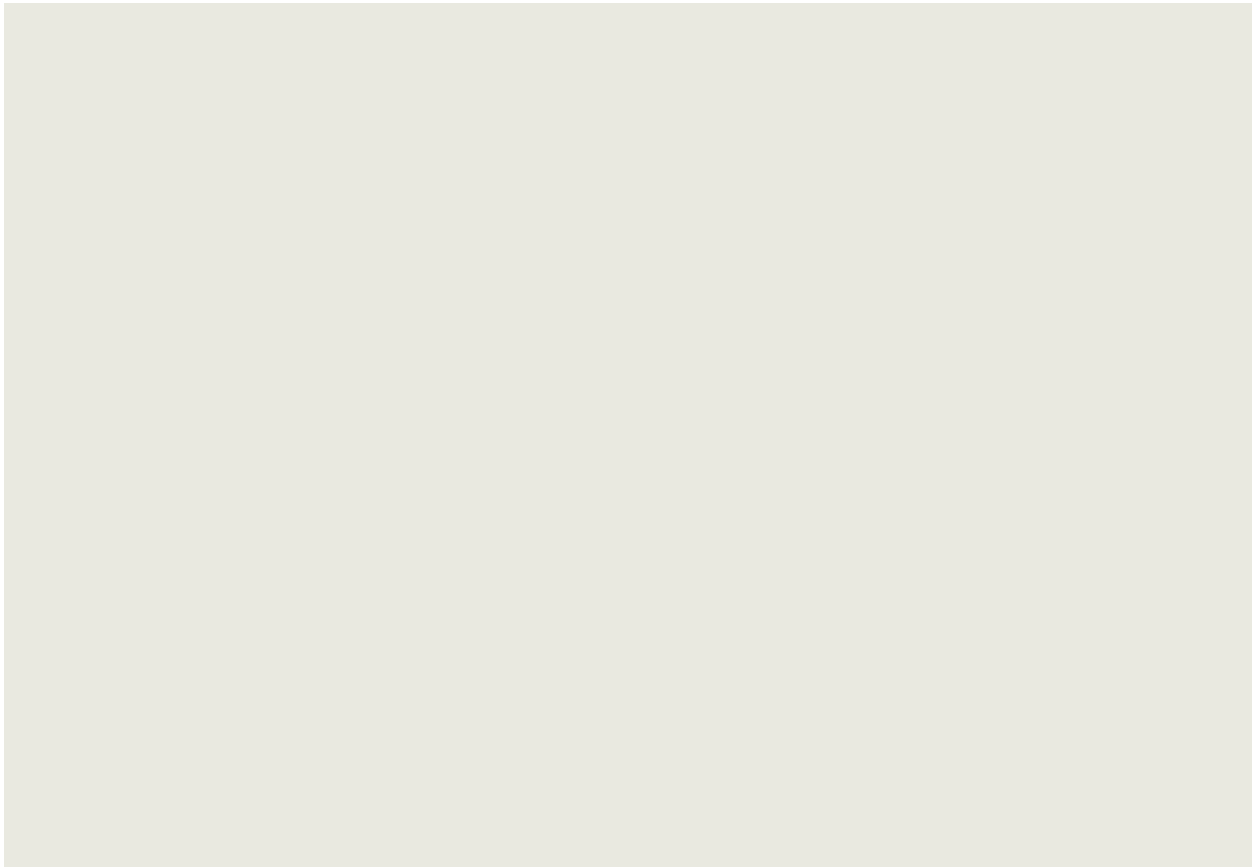


3. Who is one of the best evangelists that you know? Who can naturally guide the conversation toward the Good News in a way that seems like second nature and invites people in? What is one quality or habit they possess that helps them do that? Write it down. Is there a way for your parish as a whole to implement that habit into your demeanor, a program, or an outreach?

HABITS:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

CREATIVE PARISH IMPLEMENTATION:





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

These questions should be completed in a group discussion fashion if you are in a group, and if you are alone, complete them individually. If you are in a group, see if these inspire any further plans of action. If alone, make a note of places where it could be beneficial for others in your parish to be invited to discuss these, too.

1. What do you want to learn from this course? What are the needs in your parish and wider community that this course could teach you how to fill?

How do you feel the parish is doing in terms of evangelizing in your community? Are your weekly Mass-goers all evangelized disciples of Jesus Christ? Do the parishioners in the pews have tools to evangelize and bring others into the pews?

Think about where the need is and where some gaps may be that aren't filling those needs. Write them down and discuss.

2. Do you have any hesitations or reservations about taking this course? If so, write them down. Discuss.

“Men today have lost their way. But this is not surprising,
for men have always lost their way. The difference is that now
they have lost their address.”

- G.K. CHESTERTON

SECTION 2

New Expressions

The Message and the Modern World

CHAPTER 3: *Kerygma*: The Message

CHAPTER 4: In Church Teaching and Ministry

CHAPTER 5: Sticking to the Message

CHAPTER 6: *Kerygma*: In the New Testament

CHAPTER 7: The “Nones”

CHAPTER 8: Answering a Few Key Obstacles

CHAPTER 9: Framing the Message Today

SECTION OVERVIEW:

It has been said, “The Church does not so much *have* a mission, as the Church *is* a mission.” That mission, the *raison d’être* for the Catholic Church, is summarized in the Great Commission in Matthew 28, “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.”

Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to bring all of humanity back into a relationship with Him. In order to accomplish this mission in every place and in every era, Jesus established a Church, gathered around this mission. If the Church has been sent in this way, as the Bride of Christ, then so has your parish in a particular way been established to make disciples.

How do Catholics and parish leaders live out this Great Commission to make disciples? By proclaiming the primary message of the Gospel, or the *kerygma*. In this section, Chris delves into the roots of the word *kerygma*, inviting you individually and as a parish to

become a *keryx*, or herald, and gives the five headline points that make up the *kerygma*, noting that the *kerygma* is the love story that makes everything else in the Catholic Faith come alive for the modern world. Without it, the Faith appears to be a list of rules. But gathered around this proclamation, you, your parish, and the world can be transformed.

In this section, Chris argues that real renewal will come to our parishes when we go back to keeping the “Main Thing”—this call to evangelize—as the actual main thing, and it will come when we prioritize it as the core message for everyone we encounter: those in our pews and those who have left. By revealing how the New Testament displays the kerygmatic backdrop to everything we do as a Church, Chris shows how the message of the *kerygma* is a deeply Catholic one and how, by framing our ministry around the *kerygma*, we can chart a way forward for ministry in a post-Christian world.



“On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: “Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.” This first proclamation is called “first” not because it exists at the beginning and can then be forgotten or replaced by other more important things. It is first in a qualitative sense because it is the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis, at every level and moment.”

– POPE FRANCIS, *EVANGELII GAUDIUM*, 164

NOTES:



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1. What percentage of those in your community, both parishioners and non-parishioners, are disciples of Jesus Christ, meaning they have responded to the *kerygma* by entrusting their entire life to Jesus Christ in faith? What percentage of your efforts are designed to evangelize, or make disciples?

2. What are the three parts of the Great Commission? Write down how your parish reflects these biblical steps through different initiatives aimed to move parishioners along this path.

1.

2.

3.

3. What are the five points of the *kerygma*? How does your parish currently share this “love story?” Where could you start to incorporate the *kerygma* more so that parishioners hear it over and over again? Write down a couple of ideas. Practice, out loud, sharing the Gospel message in three minutes.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

(The *kerygma* is) “the initial ardent proclamation by which a person is one day overwhelmed and brought to the decision to entrust himself to Jesus Christ by faith.”

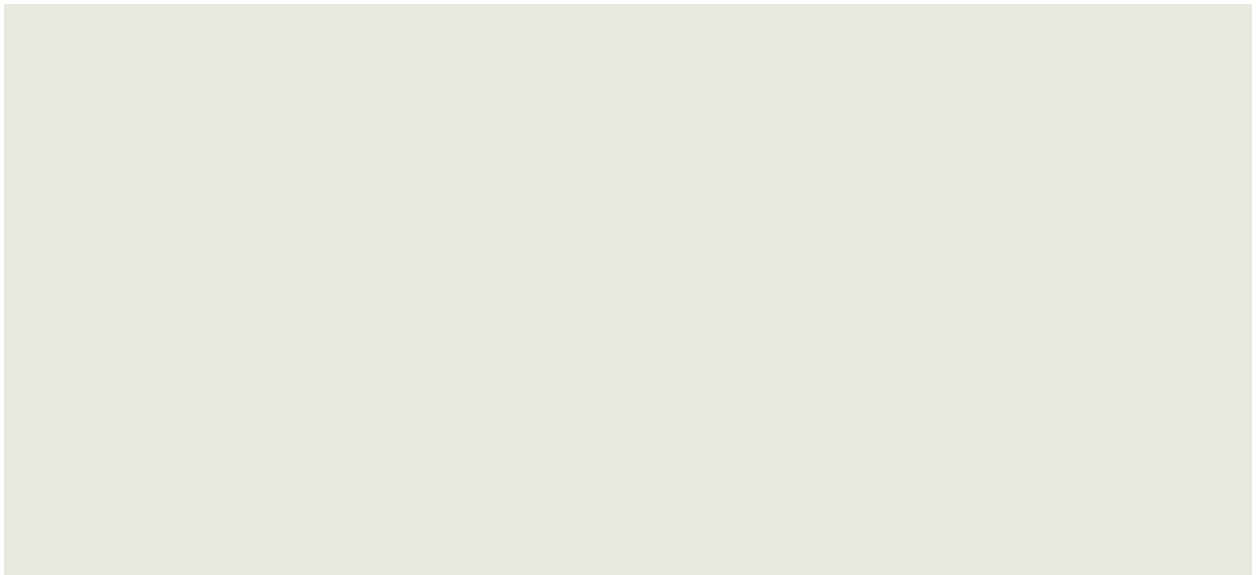
- CATECHESI TRADENDAE 25

4. Make a plan for you and your parish to implement the four steps Chris recommends to bring the *kerygma* to the actions of the parish with these questions. Look at the holes you just discovered may exist in your parish. Use these questions to guide you through a plan of what could be adjusted in your parish or ministry. Ask for help or input from the staff. Discuss it with your parish team.

1. Is your parish overt enough in how the *kerygma* is shared? Is everything brought back to the *kerygma*? Do you connect the message to everyday life? Why or why not?

2. In a particular way, Chris made the point that we have to draw the connection from the *kerygma* to the sacraments and from the sacraments to the *kerygma* as the “why” behind it all. Look at your sacramental preparation efforts. Are they kerygmatic? How can you strategically plan for this message to be shared in preparation for Baptism, First Communion, Reconciliation, and Marriage, in particular?

PLAN/IDEAS:





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

These questions should be completed in a group discussion fashion if you are in a group, and if you are alone, complete them individually. If you are in a group, see if these inspire any further plans of action. If alone, make a note of places where it could be beneficial for others in your parish to be invited to discuss these, too.

1. Recount the process of both John the Baptist and Jesus in Scripture. Meditate on what it would be like to walk alongside them, hearing the *kerygma* proclaimed in the New Testament. What sort of excitement is felt? What about their method was so impactful?

2. Chris discusses the “Nones.” Based on what you now know about them, the culture they have grown up in, and how they view the world, what is the best way to reach them with the Gospel? How can you meet them there as a parish?

3. Choose one of the obstacles to the message that Chris spoke about. As an exercise, try to articulate out loud first the argument that someone who feels this way might make, then try to offer a response based on what you’ve learned.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| a. God is anti-intellectual | c. Religion is responsible for violence/is intolerant |
| b. God is anti-science | d. I make my own religion/truth |

4. How does your parish challenge people individually to personal conversion and entrustment of their entire lives to Christ in His Church? In what ways does that happen in youth ministry, women’s ministry, events, prayer groups? Or is that invitation missing? What are your hesitations with moving in that direction? What are the potential positive outcomes of overtly challenging someone to entrust their whole life to Christ?
-
-
-

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READINGS:

ARTICLES

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger on the New Evangelization:

<https://zenit.org/articles/cardinal-ratzinger-on-the-new-evangelization/>

Blessing of Baptismal Water // Easter Vigil Liturgy:

https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/baptism_intergenerational_program_-_handouts.pdf

“The Kerygma Enigma,” Hector Molina, Catholic Answers Online

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/the-kerygma-enigma>

ENCYCLICALS

Redemptoris Missio, Pope St. John Paul II

Evangelii Nuntiandi, Pope St. Paul VI

Catechesi Tradendae, Pope St. John Paul II

BOOKS

Compendium on the New Evangelization, Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Navigating the New Evangelization, Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM

“Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes,
will he find faith on earth?”

- LUKE 18:8 (RSCVE)

SECTION 3

New Ardor

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Evangelists

CHAPTER 10: Introduction

CHAPTER 11: Keep First Things First

CHAPTER 12: Make Time

CHAPTER 13: Present the Gospel as a Celebration of Life

CHAPTER 14: Give

CHAPTER 15: Don't Let Fear Get in the Way

CHAPTER 16: Witness with Your Life

CHAPTER 17: Pray as You Go

SECTION OVERVIEW:

Evangelization is always a “life-on-life” enterprise and happens in the context of relationships. Each *keryx* or herald, speaks to another soul of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In this section, Chris lays out a foundation of seven habits of highly effective evangelists, and each chapter unpacks one of these important principles. He challenges us with these seven principles for how we can begin to habitually evangelize in our daily lives without seeming “sales-y.” Every Catholic, by beginning to live out these seven principles, can begin to naturally develop daily habits of evangelization. There are 1.2 billion Catholics in the world; imagine if all of them were living this way day-in and day-out.

NOTES:



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Habit #1: Keep First Things First

CHALLENGE: The next time you are in a parish staff meeting (large or small) pray together and speak the name Jesus out loud. Talk about Him as if He is a real person working on your team and in your lives.

Habit #2: Make Time

CHALLENGE: As a parish staff person or volunteer, do you find that evangelization is becoming something that you do "for your job" or in your ministry but not in your daily life? Take someone whom you have been meaning to invest in out for lunch or coffee and ask what God is doing in their life.

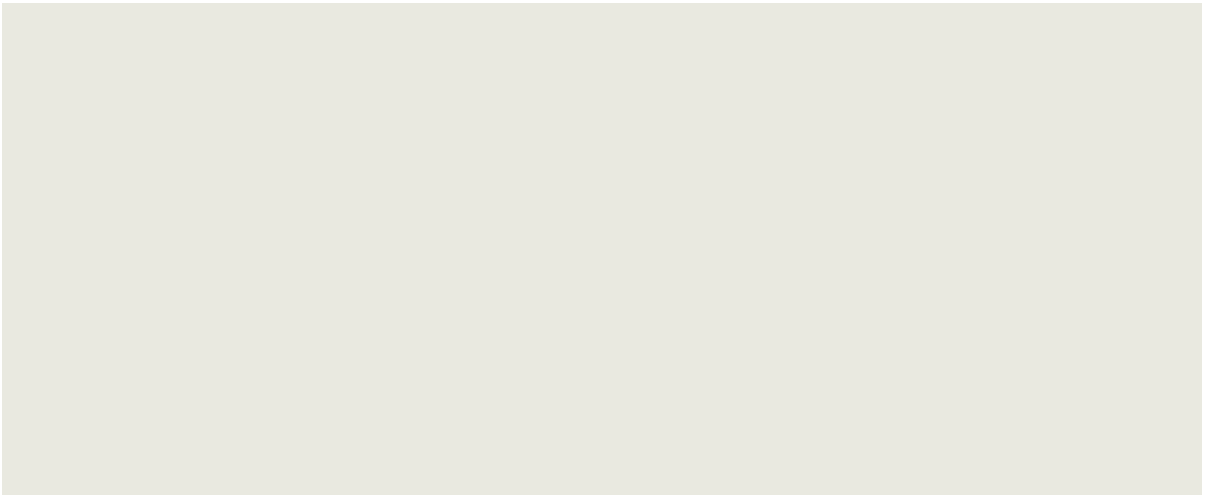


"Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."

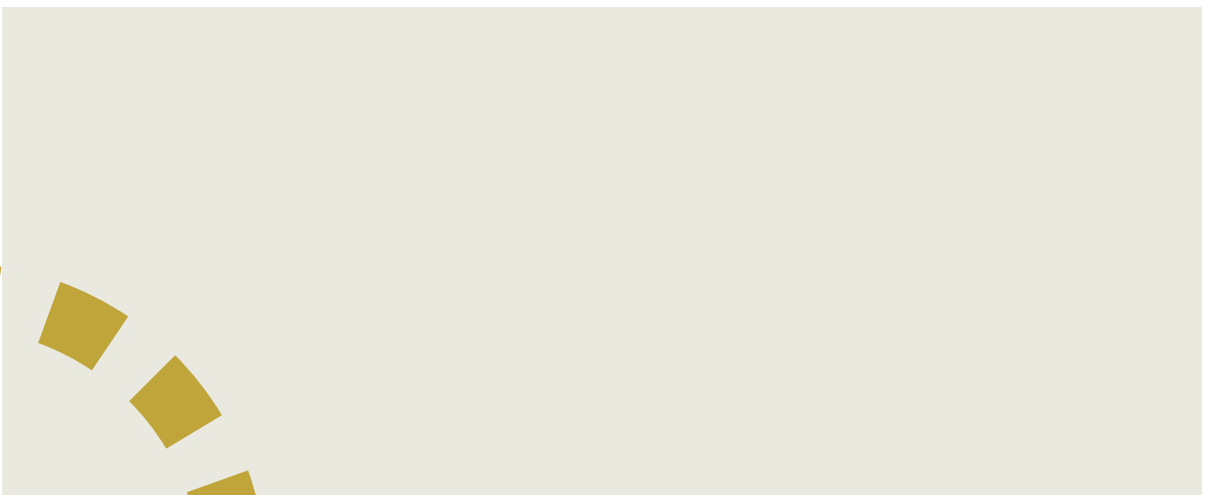
- POPE ST. PAUL VI

Habit #3: Present the Faith as a Celebration of Life**REFLECT/DISCUSS:**

- What is something that your parish can do to show the Faith as a celebration of life? Brainstorm something creative that will appeal to a key demographic that you want to reach out to. An event focused on hospitality for families to connect and celebrate? A small gathering after a morning Mass with some decorations and treats that are a favorite in your local community? Inviting over a group or council to have a backyard barbeque to thank them as a parish staff? How can you celebrate?



- How can you live as an individual in a way that shows that the Faith is a celebration of life? If you struggle to celebrate, what can you do with your family, friends, or team to celebrate life in the context of faith? How do you personally like to celebrate? Over a meal? Do you like to hike? Have someone over for a drink and good conversation? Throw a get-together? Make family dinner extra special and invite Jesus into it? Write down how you like to celebrate and make note of opportunities to do so in your day-to-day life.



Habit #4: Give

REFLECT/DISCUSS: As a parish, and individually, how can you make a greater financial commitment to the work of evangelization?

Habit #5: Don't Let Fear Get in the Way

REFLECT/DISCUSS: What conversations are you not having because of fear? How does it impact your programs, preaching, ministries, and personal life? Are you developing real friendships, being willing to “go there” and to have real conversations about faith and struggle? Why or why not?

Habit #6: Witness with Your Life

CHALLENGE: Witness with your life to your parishioners and community. Brainstorm three simple ways you can be a better witness to the joy of the Gospel in action each day. Perhaps it is being patient in the car or being patient with a difficult parishioner. Maybe it is apologizing when a lack of love is shown.

Habit #7: Pray as You Go

REFLECT/DISCUSS: Are you sitting in silence with the Lord in adoration and prayer to be able to receive what you need to do your job in the way Jesus is calling you to? Can you perceive the needs in your parishioners' lives that Jesus sees?

CHALLENGE: Implement a Holy Hour once a week with your staff team. Take the time to set aside one hour a week to sit in front of the Blessed Sacrament together to pray for your parish and receive strength and wisdom to lead it. What are the obstacles to doing this? How can you overcome them? What day and time will you implement this?

SECTION 4

New Methods

CHAPTER 18: Introduction

CHAPTER 19: Large Events Can Work!

CHAPTER 20: Small Groups: Life-on-Life Ministry

CHAPTER 21: Social Justice as Evangelization

SECTION OVERVIEW:

Ok. Let's get practical. What are some things your parish can start focusing on to do the work of evangelization? Chris's point is pretty simple; what works has not changed from the time of Christ, it's just about actually doing it well!

The most legendary pizza place in New York City is called Lucali. It is in Brooklyn. It is only open from 5:45 p.m. to 11 p.m. every night and people wait between two and four hours to eat. Every. Single. Evening.

Why is Lucali so popular? The owner, Mark Iacono, has no culinary experience and there are plenty of pizza spots in NYC. Why wait for hours? They make only two things: pizza and calzones. They do both incredibly well. Using the simplest ingredients, they craft a pizza experience that is unlike any other.

Large group evangelization events. Small group discipleship. Empowering parishioners to live the Gospel in your community. That was the method of Jesus and it still works today . . . if we do it! Simple does not mean it's easy, but we also do not have to overcomplicate the process to evangelize well.

These three elements mutually feed one another. After a large evangelistic event, invite people to continue growing in small groups. Then, eventually, you can invite small groups to serve together in the community.

Do the basics and do them well. That is Chris's vision for a renewed emphasis on evangelization in our parishes.

NOTES:



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Score your parish from 1–10 below on how well you are doing evangelizing through (1) large group events (2) small group discipleship (3) social justice and service.

LARGE GROUP EVENTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

SERVICE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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SMALL GROUP DISCIPLESHIP

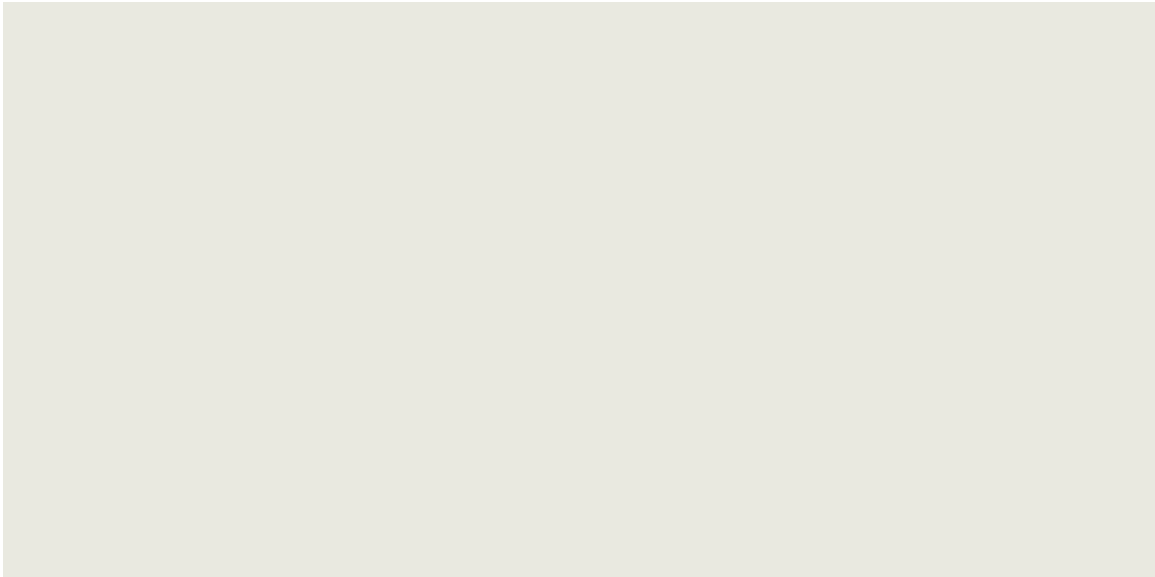
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Look at each of the three and brainstorm one simple way to improve in each in the next 6–8 months.

RUNNING A LARGE EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH EVENT:

Do you currently see space in your parish's calendar and budget for one or two large, evangelistic "main events" every year? If not, how can you create space for one? As Chris mentioned, most parishes do not have large, conversion-oriented events. Use the questions below as a reflection or discussion guide for you and your team to begin planning such an event.

1. What would the schedule be to make it intentionally evangelizing? What elements should it include?
2. What speakers could come give a kerygmatic talk?
3. Is there a team in place for outreach for the event? How can you train this team to do personal invitations? How could you train them to train others?
4. Draw out what the event might look like. Pray about it with your staff team in adoration or at the next meeting. Make the necessary steps to move forward with your decisions.



STEPS:

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

These questions should be completed in a group discussion fashion if you are in a group, and if you are alone, complete them individually. If you are in a group, see if these inspire any further plans of action. If alone, make a note of places where it could be beneficial for others in your parish to be invited to discuss these, too.

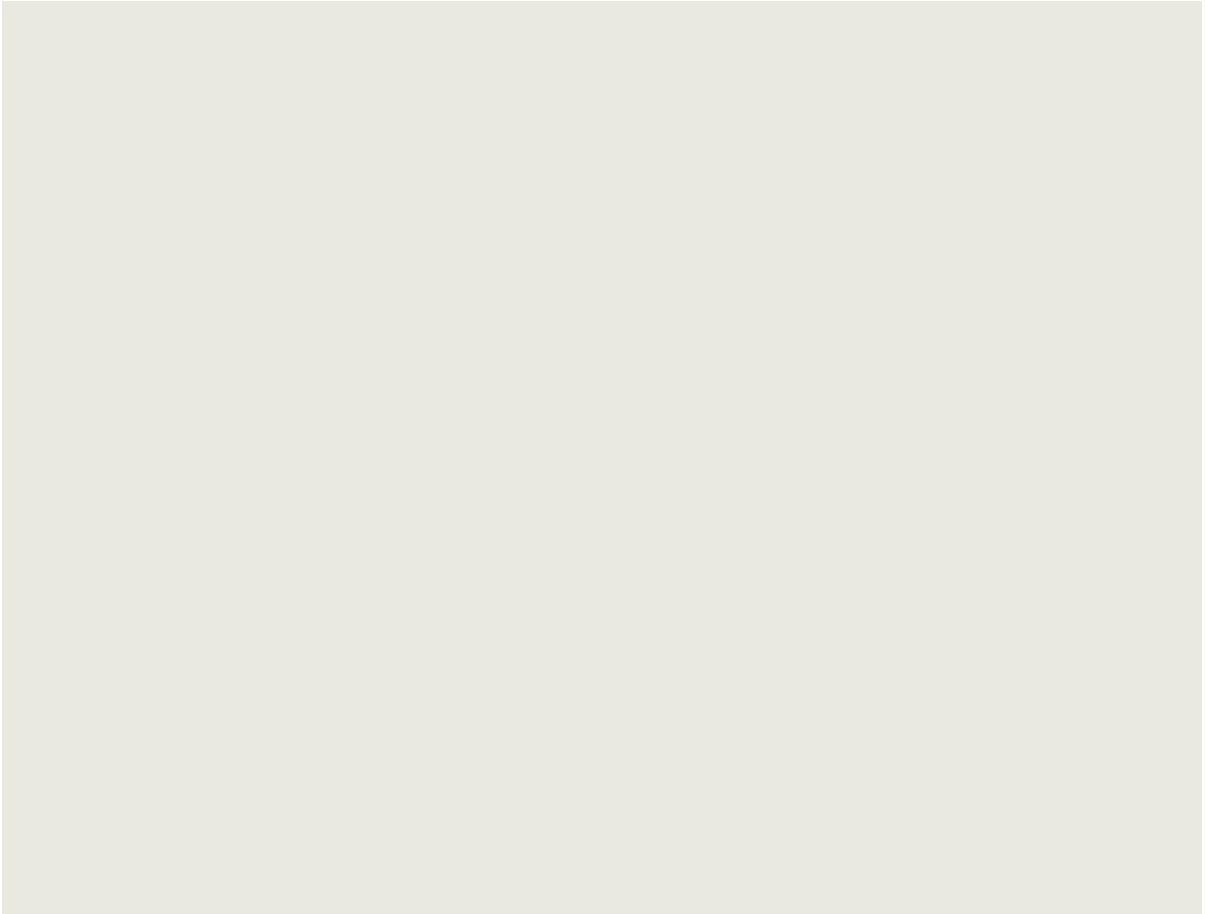
1. Serving the poor makes our witness to Jesus Christ more convincing. How does your parish's light shine before all in the world and to your parishioners? Are you inviting the laity to serve outside of the parish? How can you invite small groups to serve together with their families?



“Yet another temptation lies hidden beneath this—the temptation of impatience, the temptation of immediately finding the great success in finding large numbers. But this is not God’s way. For the Kingdom of God as well as for evangelization, the instrument and vehicle of the Kingdom of God, the parable of the grain of mustard seed is always valid (see Mark 4:31–32). . . . Paul believed that he had proclaimed the Gospel to the very ends of the earth, but the Christians were small communities dispersed throughout the world, insignificant according to the secular criteria. In reality, they were the leaven that penetrates the meal from within and they carried within themselves the future of the world (see Matthew 13:33).”

– CARDINAL RATZINGER

2. Are people in your parish (parishioners, councils, committees, and staff) trained on how to do outreach? Do they know how to intentionally invite others to an event, to Mass, or to the faith? If not, what could be done to train an outreach team and train the councils and committees to invite and reach out to the community? And further, what can be done to teach parishioners in the pews every Sunday to invite others to an event? Brainstorm here and discuss.



3. Do you have life-on-life ministries in place for discipleship with training and programs to support it? Are you personally participating in one? If you answered no to either of those, what are the steps to take to start for yourself and the parish? What steps are necessary to just start? Seek out one of the programs Chris mentioned.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READINGS/ RESOURCES:

SMALL DISCIPLESHIP GROUP RESOURCES

FORMED

<https://leaders.formed.org>

Real Life Catholic

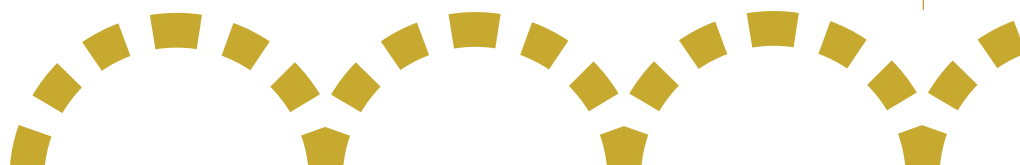
<https://reallifecatholic.com/>

Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO) Studies

<https://cco.ca/faith-studies-series/>

The Evangelical Catholic

<https://www.evangelicalcatholic.org/materials/>





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From all of the team here at Revive Parishes, we cannot thank you enough for taking the time to participate in this course. We know that you have so many demands on your time as a parish leader and we are honored to be able to support you in your work.

As you embark on this journey of evangelization, please be assured of our prayers, both for you personally and your ministry.

Come join us in our Revive Parishes community at reviveparishes.com where you can join other parish leaders in wrestling with the questions that you and others like you face every day.

If you enjoyed Chris's course and want to know more about the work he does through his ministry at Real Life Catholic, visit him at reallifecatholic.com.

May God bless you and your work for His Church abundantly.

St. Therese of Lisieux, patroness of evangelization, pray for us.