



## A Witnessing and Proclaiming Community (Evangelization)

### Opening Prayer

*It is suggested that a prayer space be arranged for the meeting. This could consist of a cloth of the appropriate liturgical season, a candle, a Bible and a crucifix.*

**Leader:** O God, Your love ignites our hearts, captures our imaginations, shapes our dreams, and awakens possibilities.

**All:** Make us disciples on fire with your love that we may bring good news to the afflicted, liberty to captives, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed. Help us, God, to enkindle in others a sense of hope that transformation is possible. Amen.

### Scripture Reading: Matthew 28:16-20

#### Faith-Sharing Question

*All are asked to reflect on the following question with a partner. The leader then brings the group together and asks individuals to share with the entire group a thought which they were discussing.*

*Describe a time when you knew that your experience of God had to be shared - that you could not keep it inside or remain silent. Tell the story of your thoughts and feelings at that time, and how you shared that experience with others.*

**Closing Prayer:** *(May be done unison or five individuals could each read one stanza)*

May God the Father who made us bless us.  
May God the Son send his healing among us.  
May God the Holy Spirit move within us and give us eyes to see with,  
ears to hear with and hands that your work might be done.  
May we walk and preach the word of God to all.  
May the angel of peace watch over us and lead us  
at last by God's grace to the Kingdom. *(St. Dominic)*  
Amen.

*This process is meant as a planning and brainstorming tool for Parish Pastoral Councils and parish members. If using this process to brainstorm objectives for a pastoral plan, it is suggested that you especially invite those members who are active leaders in the religious education life of the parish. Also, it is important to record substantial points of the conversation and/or insights by using newsprint or other means.*

### Reflecting on Church Teaching

*Several individuals are asked to read the following statements for the group. After reading the quotes, discuss the reflection question in terms of the parish as a whole, making reference to the Pastoral Goals if possible.*

"We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church." It is a task and mission which the vast and profound changes of present-day society make all the more urgent. Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection."  
*(Pope Paul VI, Evangelii Nuntiandi, 14)*

"The community gathered together must itself be constantly evangelized: each believer always needs to let himself or herself be challenged by Christ and to be converted by listening to the Word which makes great demands but at the same time is a priceless gift, for it is the proclamation of salvation, reconciliation and victory of life over death."

*(Pope John Paul II, The Vocation of the Parish)*

"The fruit of evangelization is changed lives and a changed world - holiness and justice, spirituality and peace. The validity of our having accepted the Gospel does not only come from what we feel or what we know; it comes also from the way we serve others, especially the poorest, the most marginal, the most hurting, the most defenseless, the least loved. An evangelization that stays inside ourselves is not an evangelization into the Good News of Jesus Christ."

*(USCCB, Go And Make Disciples)*

"Evangelization will always contain as the foundation, center and, at the same time the summit of its dynamism— a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ Salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy...The new evangelization is not a matter of merely passing on doctrine but rather of a personal and profound meeting with the Savior."

*(John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio, 44)*

### **Reflection Questions**

***Describe a time when our parish has best strengthened your spiritual life and that of your family. What are the things we do that most deepen and inspire your relationship with God?***

***In what ways are we already an evangelizing parish?***

### **Brainstorming Objectives**

*At this point, the facilitator reads the goal which has been established around Evangelization. The goal should also be clearly posted in the room somewhere so that all can reflect on it.*

*The focus now is for all members to brainstorm ideas to accomplish the stated goal. This begins by all individuals stating ideas that they have to accomplish the goals. These can be very specific.*

*All of these ideas are recorded on newsprint as people say them.*

*To get the conversation going, you may wish to have individuals talk with a partner first for a few minutes and then come together as a large group.*



## **Finding the Common Threads**

*Take a moment to read the following passages. Then based upon your conversation, answer the following focus questions and make a record of any consensus beginning to emerge among the group regarding future actions.*

“Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets, so that one can read it readily. For the vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint; if it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late.” (*Habakkuk 2:2-3*)

“It is not therefore a matter of inventing a ‘new program’. The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. But it must be translated into pastoral initiatives adapted to the circumstances of each community. It is in the local churches that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified – goals and methods, formation and enrichment of the people involved, the search for necessary resources – which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mold communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture. What awaits us therefore is an exciting work of pastoral revitalization – a work involving all of us.” (*Novo Millennio*)

“Christ has no body now on earth but yours; yours are the only hands with which we can do his work, yours are the only feet with which he can go around the world, yours are the only eyes through which his compassion can shine forth upon a troubled world. Christ has no body on earth but yours.” (*attributed to St. Teresa of Avila*)

### **Focus Questions**

*Of all the ideas that have been mentioned here, choose three that would enable us to foster and nurture more vibrant Evangelization efforts among all parishioners and accomplish our goal for the future. (This question is asked of all participants)*

*Are there specific ideas that are emerging as a clear consensus among the group? Which of the ideas are emerging as a consensus?*

*Which part of these common ideas can be brought to life? What resources will the parish need to achieve these goals? Who are the individuals and groups within our parish, our cluster and/or within the Diocese that need to be involved in making these goals a reality?*

