



Street Evangelization Handbook

Saint Paul

Street Evangelization

Street Evangelization Handbook

Saint Paul Evangelization Institute
info@streetevangelization.com
streetevangelization.com
(657) 777-2963

© 2020 Saint Paul Street Evangelization
All Rights Reserved
Edited by Adam Janke

Table of Contents

About SPSE & This Manual.....	4
Street Evangelization Basics.....	5
Overview.....	5
Street Evangelization Tips.....	6
SPSE Model.....	8
Pray.....	12
Prayer Basics.....	12
Intercessory Prayer.....	12
Healing Prayer.....	12
Meditative Prayer.....	13
Common Prayers.....	13
Faith Q&A.....	13
How do we get to Heaven?.....	13
Why go to Mass?.....	14
Why the Catholic Church?.....	14
Will Gay People go to Hell?.....	14
What About Mary?.....	15
What About the Saints?.....	15
What About the Eucharist?.....	15
Special Circumstances.....	16
Christ in the Poor.....	16
Evangelizing Those in Poverty.....	16
Prayers for the Poor.....	17
Evangelizing to the Unchurched.....	18
Evangelizing Those Hurt by the Church.....	19
Legal Considerations.....	20
Prayer of Consecration.....	21

About SPSE & This Manual

St. Paul Street Evangelization is one of three Catholic apostolates that make up the St. Paul Evangelization Institute (SPEI).

St. Paul Street Evangelization (SPSE), began in May 2012 as a grassroots, non-profit organization, dedicated to responding to the mandate of Jesus to preach the Gospel to all nations by taking the Catholic Faith to the streets. SPSE provides the tools and resources for Catholics to engage the culture in a simple, non-confrontational method of evangelization. The St. Paul School of Evangelization was founded in 2018 to help form evangelists that work in partnership with local Catholic parishes. The School has both online and onsite components. You can learn more at evangelizationschool.com. The St. Paul Society of Evangelists was also founded in 2018 as a group of Catholic laymen who intend on creating a society of apostolic life with a specific focus on evangelization and healing.

Every Catholic is called to share their faith with others: “The liberating message of the Gospel of Life has been put into your hands... Like the great Apostle Paul, you too must feel the full urgency of the task.

[...] This is no time to be ashamed of the Gospel. It is the time to preach it from the rooftops!” — Pope Saint John Paul II, World Youth Day, August 15, 1993

SPSE evangelists take to the streets, going wherever people are gathered – on a street corner, at a festival, at a parish, at Walmart, or even at a football game. Our motto is “to listen, befriend, proclaim, and invite.” We seek to demonstrate the kingdom of God through authentic evangelization from the heart of the church, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit (especially through prayer ministry), and by inviting people into new friendships with Christians.

St. Paul Street Evangelization has found this non-confrontational approach to be very effective at strengthening the faith of practicing Catholics, bringing back into the faith fallen-away Catholics, and clearing up misconceptions about the faith held by non-Catholics. While it is the mission of SPSE to work with God for the conversion of the whole world to the Catholic Faith, SPSE evangelists recognize that it is only their job to plant seeds. In the end, it is up to God to help those seeds grow (Matthew 13:1-23).

When out on the streets, the evangelists of SPSE share the hope that is in them (1 Peter 3:15) so that the world sees the salvation of God through the Church that He founded (1 Timothy 3:15). A person does not need to be a theologian or professional apologist to be an effective evangelist. He only needs to have a heart for Jesus Christ and His Church and be willing to share that with others.

This manual was written for our street teams, by our street teams. Others may find it useful as well, especially those engaged in other forms of evangelization.

The Discipleship Process

Given the different life experiences of every person, there is no “silver-bullet” method or process to evangelization and discipleship. Direct methods of evangelization are meant to build trust, rouse curiosity, and convict people of the need for Jesus Christ and His Church for salvation. When done correctly, these methods--e.g., Gospel proclamation, prayer ministry, and helping people examine their consciences--will hopefully lead to relational or ongoing outreach.

Street evangelization is not a “one and done” outreach. Even though we may never see most of the people we talk to again, our hope is always to help lead people into a life of discipleship where they encounter Jesus, experience a first and fundamental conversion, repent of their sins, and give their hearts to Him as their Lord and Savior. Then, through inviting

them to gatherings at our churches and elsewhere, we hope to lead them into a second step: learning how to place their entire lives under the Lordship of Jesus in the company of other Christians. This process may involve RCIA for non-Catholics and non-Christians. Other times it's done through a small group discipleship process or natural friendships arising out of doing outreach together.

Once evangelized and discipled (a process that may take several years), a Catholic then becomes a missionary, sent out to share the Good News. Of course, that does not negate the truth that even new converts are often called to evangelize immediately themselves (John 4:1-42).

It's not unusual to start doing street evangelization and find that after some initial fruitfulness, you may have many dry days - days where you wonder if street evangelization is worth it at all. At one of our street events, we invited people to enter a nearby Church to encounter Jesus in a new or deeper way. Two of our experienced evangelists spoke to over 200 people and every single person said "no," either immediately or after a short conversation. They felt like failures. And yet at the same time, other evangelists brought in hundreds of people. They were so successful that the line of people waiting for ministry extended the entire length of the Church for almost the whole night. Never be discouraged by apparent failure. St. Teresa of Calcutta reminds us that God asks for faithfulness not success. If you are faithful in evangelizing, you are not failing. This is the Holy Spirit's work. His grace is flowing, and we're simply aiming to be humble instruments of that grace. We often plant seeds that come to fruition years later.

Street Evangelization Basics

This manual will cover the basics of public street evangelization. The following is a reference guide for running a street team with St. Paul Street Evangelization. It does not replace training.

When you go out to evangelize on the street, a team of at least two Catholic evangelists is required. This is for your own safety. Keep in mind that you are there to be a public witness to the Catholic Church and to be obedient to the Holy Spirit. Choose a place with a moderate-to-high level of pedestrian traffic. Examples of suitable locations include (but aren't limited to) an art fair or farmers' market, a bus-stop, street corner, downtown, subway station platform, or a public park. If you want to be on private property or use a private venue, you must ask permission first.

Overview

Find a location and set up shop

Choose a location where you can talk to people without blocking foot traffic. You can use a small table, wagon, or a park bench to display the SPSE pamphlets, holy cards, rosaries, Miraculous Medals and other materials in an appealing way. Set out the SPSE sandwich-board to draw attention and explain what you are doing. All of these resource materials are available at the SPSE Store - stpaulsevangelization.com (under the Store tab).

Gather team and pray

When your team arrives, give them an overview of the outing, including your end time. Then pray together invoking the Holy Spirit to guide your efforts. You can ask for words of wisdom or knowledge (1 Cor 12:8). Ask for the gifts of courage and humility, and for inspiration to be docile to His promptings. Ask the Lord, through Our Lady's intercession, to send people He desires you to encounter (divine appointments), and pray that all may be done for the greater glory of

God. We find it helpful to ask for the intercession of our patron saints, Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Paul, and St. Maximilian Kolbe. If there is time, praying a Rosary or a decade of the Rosary is also helpful.

Evangelize

After prayer, it's time to evangelize. You should work in pairs so one can lead a conversation while the other listens and intercedes. In this way we continuously ask the Holy Spirit to guide the conversations. Take turns in the different roles. Be joyful, make eye contact, and smile! Remember you are on a mission from God!

Our model to listen, befriend, proclaim, and invite is explained in detail in the following pages. This method of evangelization works! It is rooted in the examples of the Apostles and Saints. St. Paul, St. Philip Neri, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. John Bosco, all who took to the streets. Pope Francis has called us to do the same. Our goal is to build relationships with people in our communities and invite them to experience the mysteries of the Christian faith through the Catholic Church. We are building a bridge of trust from the street to the parish. Through prayer and evangelization we are changing our culture.

During the outing it's good to take pictures and capture stories. When you take pictures try to take a picture of the face of the evangelist and not the person being evangelized. Send pictures and stories by email to: stories@stpaulse.com. These stories are featured on our blog and newsletter and encourage evangelists all over the world.

Team debrief and closing prayer

It is important to have a clear ending to the outing. At the predetermined time gather the team together to review the outing and discuss some of the encounters. Share any praise reports. Then pray together for all those you encountered. End with a prayer to St. Michael.

St. Michael Prayer

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; And do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, thrust into Hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Finally, thank all the evangelists and encourage the group by reminding them of the good work that was done. When you step out in faith it always bears good fruit, even if you don't always see it immediately.

Team fellowship - If possible, invite the team to some kind of fellowship afterwards. Even a short stop for a coffee or Coke gives the evangelists more time to share their experiences and grow together as a team.

Street Evangelization Tips

Basic Etiquette of Evangelizing

When our teams are out in public, we want to be sure to follow some simple "dos and don'ts" to be respectful of others and faithful to the SPSE model. Below are some guidelines to follow:

Things to Do

Smile and listen to others. Be friendly, smile, and listen to others as you share your faith. Greet people first. Face the person with whom you are speaking. Make eye contact. Share your name and find out theirs. They are probably more

nervous talking to you than you are to them. Be aware that people won't talk to you for more than a few minutes. Remember to be yourself and keep the focus on those you are talking to.

Explain ideas in simple and clear terms. As you ask questions and invite people to become Catholic (meaning accepting Jesus and His Church), answer questions in the simplest way possible. People who haven't grown up Catholic won't understand terms like *transubstantiation* or *cardinal virtues*. Catholic terminology is important, but not in your initial encounter.

Keep the conversation focused on Jesus. Our street outreach is focused on listening to others and helping them encounter Christ. Keep conversations focused on how Jesus wants to bless the person you are talking to. Whether your conversation is 30 seconds or 30 minutes, always invite people to consider the Catholic faith.

Practice Fidelity. Street Evangelists are expected to be faithful to the teachings of the Catholic faith, even on difficult topics such as human sexuality, social justice, ordination, etc. When you receive Communion you say "Amen," meaning "I believe" and are giving your assent of faith to everything the Church teaches.

Things to Avoid

Condemning others. There is a Hell, but we do not point at people and tell them they are going there. Do not yell, shout, scold, or lash out at others. Be calm. Be joyful!

Manipulation or deception. It's important to be yourself. Do not try to manipulate people into believing in the faith or pretend to be something that you are not. If people do freely accept the Gospel, they are much more likely not only to leave the Church, but to become closed off to ever coming back.

Aggressive behavior or language. We do NOT evangelize by standing on a soapbox screaming at people. We are not forceful or aggressive, hostile, or belligerent. But that doesn't mean we don't engage people or earn their respect. We can be confident and peaceful knowing that we are bringing our faith to a world that is hungry for truth.

Asking for or accepting money. We never accept money, in any fashion, while we are evangelizing on the street. We fundraise in other ways. Refer all donations to the church collection, or give them your SPSE card and direct them to the website to donate.

Engaging in Catholic-to-Catholic debate. There is room for legitimate differences among Catholics. There is plenty that can be debated. We never want to get into an argument with other Catholics in a public venue. That's not why we are here.

Following after people. If the person is not interested in continuing discussion, do not follow after them even if it is only a few steps. Stay put and know that God has others for you to speak with.



Alexandre-Denis Abel de Pujol (1787-1861)
Saint Philip baptising the Eunuch of the Queen of Ethiopia on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza
1848 - Oil on canvas Musée des Beaux-Arts, Valenciennes

Conversation Starters

It's good to start with "Would you like a free Rosary?" (OR) "Are you Catholic?" (OR) some other conversation starter. Miraculous Medals are also popular.

Consider questions to get them to talk about themselves. **Find common ground.** This can be simple and can help disarm them if they are already feeling defensive. "What church do you go to?" "Where are you from?" "Are you from the area?" "What do you do for work?" "Do you have any children?" "What are your hobbies?" "What sports do you like?" "What are your favorite movies or authors?" "Is there anything we can pray for you about?"

If they say they are Catholic: "Great, what Parish do you go to?" "What do you like about going to Mass?" "What is your favorite part about being Catholic?" (Open the door for them to talk about any difficulties.) "Can we pray with you?" "How can we pray for you?" "Do you pray the Rosary?" "Do you go to Church every Sunday?" "Do you get to Confession?"

If they say they are not Catholic: "Do you have a faith that you follow?" "Have you considered becoming Catholic?" "Are there any stumbling blocks keeping you from being Catholic?" "Is there anything that I can offer up in prayer for you?" "Can I pray with you?"

SPSE Model

Saint Paul Street Evangelization uses a four-part approach to evangelization: Listen, Befriend, Proclaim and Invite. The first two steps fall into the area of pre-evangelization and the last two in evangelization. We use prayer throughout the encounter. It is one of the best ways to invite the Holy Spirit into the midst of an encounter.

Listen

We need to earn the right to be heard, by first asking conversation-starting questions to get the other person to talk about themselves. I need to know more about the circumstances of this person's life and where they are in their walk with God before I know how to evangelize them.

Our culture today is steeped in loneliness. A recent Cigna survey showed that almost half of all respondents reported feeling alone or left out and almost 70 percent of young people feel like no one knows them. We have an opportunity on the street to make a difference by listening to those we meet.

When we listen to another, we demonstrate that we are interested in knowing who they are and what their story is. Listening is an act of charity, which is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. By listening first, we open the door to God's love.

By far the most important aspect of listening is an attentive posture towards the Holy Spirit. As we are interacting with people, at another level we are also listening to the promptings of God. This inner posture is something that must be cultivated in our prayer times and life outside of our time on the street. Remember that we can't give what we don't have.

Active Listening/Diving Deeper

When interacting with people and asking questions to draw out conversation to-determine where they are in their faith journey, use what is called *active listening*.

Try to clear your mind of distractions and worries. Be attentive to what they're saying, and from time to time respond with a summary in your own words of what you understand they are communicating. Try to pick up on body language and other non-verbal communication. Ask the next (follow-up) question – often people will make statements that hint at deeper issues, then wait to see if you're interested before going on. Asking “the next question” gives them permission to share more deeply, and shows that you are paying attention.

Active listening is work – it is a skill that takes practice to develop, but it is one of the most effective ways of loving another person, and can be profoundly healing.

Ideas for going deeper:

- How would you describe your relationship with God?
- Tell me more about that.
- So what you are saying is ...
- How did that happen?
- How is that working for you?
- How is your prayer life?
- Have you ever felt close to God?

Befriend

Based on the person's story and where they are in their walk with God, we can seek to find common ground with them. Now that we have listened, we can respond to them and love them as Christ would love them. This might be as simple as "I understand. When I was in high school I really doubted that God existed, in fact...[story]."

Some people evangelize as if they thought the primary goal of evangelization was to win an argument. Intellectual debate is rarely a good means for bringing people to Christ and the Catholic faith. Even experienced Catholic apologists (defenders of the Catholic faith) often find that arguing with people usually only drives them to become even more

entrenched in their views. This is not because we don't have the best arguments to make, but because effective argument takes willing, well-disposed participants. Whether you start with "getting-to-know-you" type questions, or offering a sacramental or prayer, it is important to find common ground.

The most fundamental reason to befriend someone is love. To evangelize effectively, we need to discover how we can befriend the person before using active listening. The active listener sets his agenda aside to act as a servant to the person before him, saying only what will build them up in Christ. By being attentive to himself, the Holy Spirit, and the person he is speaking to, the active listener strives to move the conversation forward according to God's holy will, and transition into preaching the gospel how and when the Lord desires.

Learning to befriend someone using active listening skills takes time and practice. Below are some practical guidelines to help you gain this skill.

Be aware. Throughout your conversation, pay attention to the present moment. Be attentive to yourself, so that you can maintain a respectful disposition and proper body language throughout the conversation. This also helps you pay attention to thoughts and inspirations coming from the Holy Spirit.

Pay attention. Listen to the person and remember what they say. Notice their body language. Are they open to this conversation? What emotional state are they in as they speak to you? What are they interested in? What concerns them? What is on their heart? If they share with you a heart-wrenching story of how a family member passed away, that's probably something to delve into. If they are angry or confused about God and religion, you might ask them more about it later on. If they seem bored or uninterested, it's probably the time to redirect, ask well-placed questions, and find out what's really going on with them. Do everything out of genuine love and concern.

Withhold judgment. Yes, Jesus Christ is the one Way to eternal life (see Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12). But imitating our Lord Jesus, we do "not come to judge the world but to save the world" (Jn 12:47). Our Lord Himself exhorts us to not judge others, lest we be judged (see Mt 7:1-5). Instead of criticizing false views right away, withhold judgement until it is truly helpful. Instead of hardening yourself to people in gravely immoral lifestyles, consider whether you may be called to follow the Lord's example and "eat with tax collectors and sinners" (Mt 9:11).⁸ We are there to minister to others, to bring Christ to them. That comes first, before correcting errors. Like St. Paul, we come to build up, not tear down (see 2 Cor 13:10).

Reflect back/summarize. Be aware of the possibility that you might misunderstand what a person is saying. Repeat or summarize for them what they've told you to make sure you understand. "So you said that you're on your way to New York for another spinal surgery?" This also has the benefit of showing them that you've been listening to them, and opens the way to ask questions. "Yes? ... How many surgeries have you had so far?"

Ask questions. Clarify any areas that are unclear. Show your interest by asking questions. Open ended questions are often the best. They give people a chance to keep expanding on what they're telling you. "I'm sorry that happened to you. When your landlord kicked you out of your house, what did you do?" "Can you tell me more about that?"

Proclaim

Now that we have listened to their story and found common ground, how can we proclaim the Gospel to this person? This will vary from person to person and story to story. How we minister to a Muslim will vary greatly with how we minister to a "None". This might be the time for prayer ministry if someone is hurting, to talk about Jesus with a fellow Christian or non-believer, or to give "One Good Reason". This might be something like, "I doubted God existed, in fact [story]. Can I give you one good reason why I believe that God exists now?"

“But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?” Romans 10:14

When listening to someone on the street, how and when do we transition to proclaiming the gospel? As we already said, we need to listen to the Holy Spirit and use active listening skills. By these means, we can see and take advantage of opportunities to move the conversation forward and share the gospel. With the help of the Lord, we need to find an “opening” in the conversation - an opening into which we can speak the words of God.

How might this happen, in the give-and-take of the conversation? If you have used active listening skills and treated the person with respect, then he or she will usually be open to whatever you have to say next. If someone trusts you, they will likely listen to you and be vulnerable with you. That in itself can create the opportunity you’re looking for. However, it is worth noting that we usually find openings to preach the gospel only after the conversation has already moved into the realm of religion. Once the person you’re talking to is sharing with you their own journey of faith, or their own views of religion, or their own relationship with God, then prime opportunities to share the gospel won’t be long in coming.

With this in mind, a great way to help make the transition to preaching the gospel is to ask the person about their faith story. “Do you have a religious background?” “Did you grow up going to church?” “Do you go to church?” Afterwards you can transition to sharing the Gospel by stating, “There are a lot of misunderstandings in our world today about Christianity. Do you mind if I share with you what we actually believe?”

When prompted by the Holy Spirit use the proclamation of the Gospel on the next page to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others. It is short, simple, and powerful.

The Gospel

1. God loves you. He created you out of love to be in a relationship with Him. He has a plan for your life (1 Jn 4:16; Jer 29:11).
2. But due to sin, we’re separated from God. Sin is destructive, and leads to eternal separation from God in Hell (Rm 3:23, 6:23).
3. God sent His Son Jesus to become man and make atonement for our sins by dying on the cross, and to rise from the dead to give us eternal life (Jn 3:16).
4. We receive this gift of salvation, and the Holy Spirit, when we put our faith in Jesus, repent of our sins, are baptized, and become His disciples (Eph 2:8-9; Acts 2:38). Jesus established the Catholic Church to teach in His name, empower us by His grace, and restore us to salvation if we fall (Mt 16:18-19; 1 Jn 1:9)

The Gospel in One Sentence

In Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died on the cross and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all people as a gift of God’s grace and mercy.

After sharing this with them, ask them if they would like to be in a right relationship with God? If so, offer them the opportunity to pray with them right then.

Invite

Whatever outreach method we use, our ultimate goal is to evangelize and bring people to Jesus. We can do that through 2-minute conversations with people on the street. Sometimes that isn’t the end of the conversation and a person might want to keep talking. That means follow-up. How can we invite this new friend of ours into a longer term relationship

with the local church? This might mean something like, "Thanks for letting me share why I believe in God. I can't believe I made a new friend today! Hey, I would love to keep in touch, here is my card. Did you know we have this event at our church to explore topics like this? Would you be interested in coming?"

Pray

One of our core ministries is praying with those we meet on the street or in our daily life. Prayer can fit in anytime in the evangelization encounter. Sometimes it opens a conversation, other times it's the perfect ending to an encounter. There are many ways to pray for the needs of those we meet - it is good to be specific to their particular needs. When the person you are talking to shares difficulties in their life, say, "Would it be alright if I prayed for you right now?" You can also bring up prayer by saying, "We are out here taking prayer requests - Is there anything you need prayer for?"

Prayer Basics

When praying with others, it is ideal to have one main prayer "leader" and one person to intercede. The intercessor focuses on lifting up both the one being prayed for and the street evangelist in prayer to the Lord. Once the person with whom you are speaking shares what they would like prayer for, begin with the Sign of the Cross. Then, move on to A.C.T.S. or another appropriate prayer type (see below). End with the Sign of the Cross.

When praying for someone, use language like, "May I say a prayer for you?" That way they are not under the impression that you are asking them to pray out loud, which can be intimidating. Tell them that you will pray and you want them to simply receive from the Lord. Remember to be prudent in prayer and keep the prayer short. Practically speaking, many people we talk to on the street are on their way somewhere, so we want to be short and sweet unless we have their permission for longer prayer.

Intercessory Prayer

Prayers of intercession and petition is the most common form of prayer where we ask God to make His presence known and address a particular need. This should take no longer than 60 seconds.

ACTS Method of Intercessory Prayer

Adoration - The goal of the spiritual life is to give God praise, thanks, and glory.

Contrition - When praying we often need to repent of our sins and forgive others.

Thanksgiving - Even when everything is going wrong, there are still things in our life to be thankful for.

Supplication - Finally we pray for the particular need the person has shared with us.

Healing Prayer

Healing is one way in which Catholic evangelists demonstrate the kingdom of God here on earth, announcing the Gospel and bringing people into a saving relationship with Jesus and His Church. Disease and illness are part of the dominion of the devil. Jesus came and performed healings and miracles to announce the kingdom of God.

We have an entire course and book on healing prayer called *Ordinary Signs, Extraordinary Christians* published by The Word Among Us Press that we encourage you to read to learn more about how to pray for healing. In the book, we use a four-step method for praying for others.

1. **Interview & Prepare:** Begin by finding out about the condition the person suffers from. Prepare by building faith, sharing stories of healing, and explaining what might happen during healing if appropriate.
2. **Pray:** Call on the Holy Spirit and pray for healing, asking permission first before putting your hand on the area of illness or injury. With confidence in God's mercy and love, use a prayer of petition, "In the name of Jesus, I ask that Celia's back injury be healed. Or use a prayer of command if you have read our book and are trained to use such prayers. - "In the name of Jesus I command this headache of John's be healed now."
3. **Reinterview:** After a short time of praying, stop and check to see if anything has happened during prayer. Thank God for any improvement and state that God loves the person that we prayed for.
4. **Follow up:** This is a good time to proclaim the gospel in some fashion, speaking the truth to them in love. Also be sure to give encouragement and offer a final prayer or invitation.

Meditative Prayer

Both the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet (DM) fall under meditative prayer. An explanation of the Rosary can be found in our Rosary pamphlet. The DM Chaplet is on our DM prayer card. Evangelists can share their own experience briefly with either of these meditative prayers. The person with whom you are praying can be encouraged to gradually increase their time in prayer and to keep something that reminds them to pray (rosary or a holy card)

Common Prayers

The Lord's Prayer (Our Father), the Hail Mary, and the Glory Be can be found in our Daily Prayers pamphlet. To pray any prayer aloud together is a great idea.

Faith Q&A

This section presents explanations for common faith questions as a means to remove roadblocks for those honestly seeking the truth. Recall that the purpose of apologetics is to answer questions so the person you are speaking with can give themselves intellectual permission to act on the desire of their will: to accept the invitation of Jesus to faith and conversion.

If the conversation turns combative, hold to the truths of the faith, but steer the conversation back to common ground. You may want to pray through the difficulty with charity and humility. You have probably given them something to think about, even if they don't agree. Offer pamphlets as a way for someone to look further into a topic.

How do we get to Heaven?

Some people think just about everyone goes to Heaven, but Jesus tells us that is not true (Mt 22:14). To go to heaven you must be reconciled to God (be in right relationship with God) when you die. That means you have to *choose* to live your life according to God's plan.

- Make a decision to commit your life to God through Jesus Christ (John 6:29; Deut 30:19; Rom 3:24 justified by grace through faith)
- Repent of your sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 1:15)
- Be baptized (Mark 16:16, 1 Pet 3:21)
- Follow the way of Jesus in your daily life and become members of the Catholic Church (Titus 2:11-12)

God loves us so much that through Jesus he laid down his life for each one of us even knowing all the evil we have ever done or ever will do. To live the Christian life is to love God in response to the love he has shown us (1 Jn 3:1)

Why go to Mass?

Some look at their faith as a “Me & Jesus” relationship and discount the need for worshiping as the Body of Christ. This is a distortion.

- Establish that going to public worship at Mass is commanded by God and Jesus said if we love him we’ll keep his commandments. Obedience = worship (Deut 5; Jn 14:15)
- The Bible shows that the first Christians worshipped together on Sundays, with songs and teachings, and the breaking of the bread. (Acts 2:42, Col 3:16; Act 20:7)
- We are a part of the Body of Christ called to build each other up and bring unity to the faith (Heb 10:24-27; Eph 4:11-13; 1 Cor 12??
- Mass gives us the grace we need for eternal life (see Eucharist). It’s a grave sin to neglect the duty to attend Mass on Sunday and holy days as God commanded (Heb 10:25-26).

We need to come together in the house of God to receive the grace that will build our faith individually and as the Body of Christ.

Why the Catholic Church?

When someone says all churches are the same, point out that it can’t be true because the different churches teach contradictory things.

Then point out that although other Christian churches have elements of truth, only the Catholic Church has the fullness of truth.

- Christ established a church that was visible and recognizable by his followers (Mt 5:14; Mt 18 15-17; 1 Tim 3:15)
- Jesus selected Peter and the Apostles and gave them the authority to lead and guide the church (Mt 16; Lk 10:16; Act 15)
- Faith and authority is passed on through ordination (not personal interpretation) (Act ; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; 1Cor 15:3; 2Pet 3:16)
- The Catholic Church is the one church established by Jesus (John 17:20-23; Eph 4:4-6)

We can have confidence in the truth of the Catholic Church because it’s the church that Jesus established. He promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. That means it’s protected by the Holy Spirit from teaching anything false.

Will Gay People go to Hell?

When people ask this kind of question, it is usually coming from a place of pain, fear, or anger. As usual, pray and be attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and try to minister to the spiritual needs of the person. If they are emotionally wounded and fragile, be gentle and avoid inadvertently tearing them down. If they are stronger, you may speak more boldly. In either case, speak the truth in love.

If their question is whether homosexual activity is a sin, the answer is *yes*. But if the question is really, “Is it a sin too big for God’s mercy?” then the answer is *no*. The real, straightforward answer to the question itself is, “Anyone who dies in a state of unrepented serious sin will go to Hell.” You may find the following points helpful:

- “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart” (Prv 21:2).
- Homosexual activity is not the only sin, and not the worst. Each of us, in one way or another, struggles with sin and needs the mercy of God (see Rm 3:23).
- God knows and loves each one of us more than we even know and love ourselves (see Is 54:8).

- We are not defined by our sexual attractions, or our sins, but by our identity as beloved children of God (see Rm 8:14; Gal 3:26).
- God seeks out each person individually, to open his heart to repentance (see Lk 15:1-5).
- In the end, God judges each person justly, reading the secret thoughts and intentions of his heart (see Jer 17:9-10).
- Will gays go to Hell? *Only those who refuse until their very last breath to accept the mercy of God* (see Lk 23:39-43). But this is the same for every other sinner—*every one of us*—thieves, drunkards, liars, idolaters, gluttons, the greedy, the envious, the rebellious, etc. (see Gal 5:19-21).
- In living God’s plan, we aren’t alone. There is help. And God is patient with us.

See our pamphlet, “God’s Plan for Sexuality” for further information to share.

What About Mary?

Questions regarding Mary can be a stumbling block for some. It’s best to use our pamphlets to answer the heavier theological questions, but a simple walk through scripture can be used to explain the basics and dispel some common myths about Mary the mother of Jesus.

- She is chosen and holy - (Luke 1:28, 1:42)
- She is obedient to God’s will for her life (Lk 1:38)
- She praises God (Lk 1:46-55)
- She ponders and prays (Lk 2:19)
- She encourages us to follow Jesus (Jn 2:5)
- All generations should call her blessed (Lk 1:48)

Mary, like our earthly mother, simply shows us the way. We can have a relationship with her and ask for her help. (We don’t worship her, worship is given to God alone)

What About the Saints?

Confusion often stems from the misunderstanding that the saints keep us from Jesus instead of the reality that they lead us to Jesus by their example and intercession. First we establish that intercessory prayer is normal for Christians. We pray for each other. Then using scripture we can show:

- The saints are alive and with God in Heaven (Mark 12:26-27) If they are in Heaven, then they are righteous.
- The prayers of the righteous are powerful and effective (James 5:16)
- Those in heaven are our Great Cloud of Witnesses and know what’s going on (Hebrews 12:1)
- Those in heaven are praying all the time (Revelation 5:8 and 8:3). Who are they praying for? Not for themselves, they are already in Heaven. They are praying for us!

It only makes sense to ask the saints to pray for you. The difference between asking a friend to pray for you, and asking the saints in heaven to pray for you is that the prayers of the saints are more powerful.

What About the Eucharist?

The Eucharist is the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. Recognize how odd the reality of the Eucharist is for those who don’t understand it. It can be considered blasphemous or idolatry to a believer who thinks we are worshiping a piece of bread. It is a hard teaching, so be patient with those who struggle with it. Give them time to process the scriptural arguments.

First establish that it is possible for God to do anything, even something that we cannot understand. From scripture we can show:

- Jesus established the new covenant with us at the Last Supper and told us to “do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19-20).

- Jesus truly gave us his body and blood and was not speaking symbolically. Jesus told us in John 6 that we need to eat his body and drink his blood to have life in us. He used very graphic language. (John 6:51-58) You can ask, “do you want eternal life?”
- Many who heard Jesus say this turned away from him and this teaching. But notice that Jesus didn’t call them back and change the teaching. He did not say he was speaking symbolically. He let them leave!! How hard was it for Jesus to let them leave? (John 6:66)
- Paul confirmed the reality of the Eucharist when he warned not to take it “in an unworthy manner.” If it was merely a symbol no warning would be necessary. (1 Cor 11:27)
- Jesus’ last words to his apostles at the end of Matthew’s Gospel were, “I will be with you always until the end of the age” (Mt 28:20). The Eucharist is a beautiful gift for us. Jesus is made present at every Mass and is present in all the tabernacles of the world waiting for us to visit and receive him.
- Jesus gave the authority to “do this in memory of me” to his apostles, who passed it to their successors, so that every Catholic priest today has been ordained by a bishop who was ordained by a bishop (and so on) all the way back to the original apostles. We call this apostolic succession. Only those in this direct line in the New Covenant have the ability to confect the Eucharist.

The early fathers and many Eucharistic miracles confirm the teaching. The teaching is hard. Let the person read the words in John 6 himself and then ask, “What if Jesus really meant what he said? What if it’s true?”

Some may argue that John 6:63, “The words I have spoken to you are spirit” refutes everything that Jesus previously said. However the word “Spirit” refers to our need for faith through the power of the spirit. The word spirit is never used in scripture to mean a teaching is only symbolic.

Special Circumstances

Christ in the Poor

The Church and Scripture

The Catholic Church has a preferential option for the poor. The Catechism of the Catholic reminds us that, "The Church's love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition. This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor. Love for the poor is even one of the motives for the duty of working so as to be able to give to those in need. It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty." (CCC 2444)

This Church’s preference for the poor comes from Jesus who proclaims He has come to bring good news to the poor. In Luke 4:18-19 Jesus reads aloud in the synagogue, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Christ has come for the poor, so we as evangelists must also seek to proclaim the Good News to the poor as well.

We can romanticize the work with the poor, but in reality do not be surprised if you find it difficult. Seeing the face of Jesus in the face of the poor requires faith and conversion of heart. Always remember when you are reaching out to the poor you are reaching out to Christ. In Matthew 25 Jesus says, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Evangelizing Those in Poverty

What is our goal when dealing with the poor? Sharing the Love of God! Listen and lift all concerns to God. Proclaim the name of Jesus and His love.

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. (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 1975 # 22).

Work to bring the person to the next level of faith after hearing where they are now.

Names are important in any evangelistic outreach but most especially with the poor. To receive a meal or other services at some locations, the poor do not have to interact with anyone. At other locations, they do need to provide their name. It's been said that a homeless person can go for six months or so without even hearing their name spoken. Ask their name and give yours. Make eye contact. Use their name during conversation where appropriate.

Often the poor are more open to an evangelist than others. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, mental illness and addiction often overlap. In fact, nearly 9 million people have a co-occurring disorder. This can make evangelization more of a challenge.

If you need to conclude a conversation promptly (mental health issues/ anger/discord), consider the following: "You've got a lot going on/have been through some tough times (name) for sure! Let's lift all of these concerns to Jesus." Or if the Evangelist needs to close the discussion: "I hope you have a blessed day" or "God bless you, (name)", and move toward another person or toward the door. Wounds have been suffered by many, especially the poor. Thus charity and love must prevail to prevent yet another wound of hurt or rejection.

Use caution even when extending a hand for a handshake. Injuries can be (and have been) suffered in a simple handshake if a person has extreme anger or is high or drinking.

Be mindful of your personal items and of the person with whom you are speaking. Stand near their belongings so that they are not distracted and wondering if their belongings are safe.

If you are working at a soup kitchen, be aware that it may take many months of patrons seeing you in action before they decide to approach the SPSE table.

As with any evangelization, know that others are listening in on your explanation of the faith. Many are curious but allow pride to stand in the way of asking.

Offer to pray with each person. Evangelize all in the building including the other volunteers (those preparing and serving food, the persons wiping the tables, the cell phone vendor, the person providing free flu shots or blood pressure readings).

Prayers for the Poor

Prayer: Oh my God, You know my weakness and failings, and that without Your help I can accomplish nothing for the good of souls, my own and others. Grant me, therefore, the help of Your grace. Grant it according to my particular needs this day. Enable me to see the task You will set before me in the daily routine of my life, and help me work hard at my appointed tasks. Teach me to bear patiently all the trials of suffering or failure that may come to me today. Amen.

Prayer for work: Almighty God and Father, you have made us in your own image so that we may find joy in creative work: have mercy on all those who are unemployed, and those who find their work dull, especially for _____. Help us to build a society where all may have work and find joy in doing it, for the good of our world and the glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Gemma - Have patience, have patience, God will provide.

Special considerations evangelizing in areas of poverty

While working with the poor can be a source of great blessing, it is important to be aware of possible challenges.

In some areas where we evangelize, there may be panhandlers or others asking for money.

We never give money to people on the street - feel free instead to have items along that you can give out such as small bottles of water, small snacks, socks, etc.

Safety/Security – If you are in a vulnerable area, be cautious using restrooms in unsecured areas, leaving personal items out, and keeping all supplies out of sight. You might consider putting out less than you would in different areas (they may try to sell them) since supplies are limited.

Resources – Be sure to have resource cards for local shelters, food shelves, or soup kitchens.

Hygiene- If you have a table set up at a soup kitchen, it would be kind to include hygiene supplies to give out (toothbrushes, toothpaste, hand sanitizer, etc.) that homeless people may have trouble obtaining.

Evangelizing to the Unchurched

According to a 2017 Pew Research Center study, the fastest-growing religious group in America is those with no religious affiliation, currently around 25% of the population. While each person's story is unique, some characteristics are common among people raised in a secular environment, including:

1. Ignorance of basic Christianity (you may need to define sin, God, salvation, etc.)
2. Seeking life before death (focus on how your walk with Christ affects your life today)
3. Untrusting and doubtful (initially focusing on personal sin may rouse barriers to acceptance)
4. Alienation from nature, community, political life (often accompanied by loneliness)
5. Low self-esteem (faith is needed to understand your value as made in God's image; without this, materialism is often used to fill the void)
6. Feel life is 'out of control' (testimony about how Christ sets us free from our compulsions and gives us hope for the future can be effective to present to unchurched folks)

Helpful opening questions for someone without a church background may include:

- “Do you ever just wonder at the majesty/beauty of things? Where did all this come from?”
- “Do you ever ask yourself what you are getting out of life?”
- “Do you ever ask yourself the meaning of life?”
- “Do you have a sense of dread, foreboding, panic, or terror?”

When speaking with someone who is highly skeptical of truth claims, it may be effective to speak of beauty and its transcendental nature, how experiencing beauty opens us to the possibility of greater realities than we can perceive by our senses.

A common obstacle to faith is relativism, the idea that truth or morality is relative to context. In response, we could point out that relativism is self-refuting (“Is it ABSOLUTELY true that there are no moral absolutes?”), or that relativism offers no basis for defending the weak from exploitation by the ruthless.

Evangelizing Those Hurt by the Church

For many people a major stumbling block to faith is the various perceived or actual failings of the Church, such as the sex abuse of minors, or a personal wound that someone experienced at the hands of a member of the faithful.

Helpful approaches can include:

1. Admitting when people in the Church have sinned. (Example – “I totally agree with you – it is terrible when a bishop transfers an accused priest to another parish without notifying the authorities.”)
2. Apologize / ask forgiveness. (Example – “On behalf of the church, please accept my apology. But please do not leave Jesus because of Judas.”)
3. Pray through it with the person if they are open.
4. Jesus promised scandal in the church & that the weeds would grow with the wheat. But we don't leave Jesus because of Judas.



The Annunciation by Fra Angelico - Museum of S Marco

Legal Considerations

If I want to pass out rosaries or religious literature in a public place like on the sidewalk or in a park, do I need a permit?

Generally, you do not need a permit to pass out literature or speak to people in public places like streets, sidewalks or city parks. Those places are considered “traditional public forums” where free speech rights are protected. Even in traditional public forums, however, cities are allowed to regulate the time, place, and manner of speech in some ways (such as limiting noise), but any such regulations must be reasonable and cannot be based on the content of the speech.

Are there places where I absolutely cannot speak or distribute literature? The rules for distributing literature are different for places which do not fit the definition of a “traditional public forum.” For example, airports are not considered a traditional public forum for First Amendment purposes, so you do not have the same freedom of speech in that location as you do on a public sidewalk. You will need to ask permission.

Can I speak and hand out literature on public university campuses? How about public elementary, middle, or high schools?

Public schools are not considered traditional public forums for First Amendment purposes, so there is less protection of speech in those places than there is for streets, sidewalks, and parks. If a particular location at a school or university is considered open to the general public, however, restrictions on speech may have to meet the same requirements as on a public sidewalk. For example, speaking or passing out literature in the middle of an open university square is usually allowed while doing the same at an elementary school playground may not be. When in doubt, ask for permission.

Can I speak and hand out literature at my local farmers market?

Free speech at farmers markets which are held in a place considered a “traditional public forum” (streets, sidewalks, and parks) has the same protection as at other traditional public forums. Often times farmers markets apply for permits and have private use of public grounds covering a certain area and you’ll have to ask for permission.

RULE #1: When in doubt, ask permission

If possible, get permission in writing from someone who is authorized to grant it.

RULE #2: Always obey law enforcement officers

If you are asked to leave an area where you know you have a legal right to assemble, comply with the officer. Write down their information, the location where you were evangelizing, and then contact us. We do not want you to risk a citation or arrest. Our office can contact the authorities for you to make certain that everyone knows that you have permission to evangelize there before you set up in that location again.

Remember – the national office is here to help! Don't be afraid to ask questions.

Prayer of Consecration

God our Father, I believe that you created me out of love. In a thousand ways I have sinned against you. I repent of all of my sins. Please forgive me.

Thank you for sending your Son to die for me, to save me from Hell. I choose this day to renew my covenant with you and to place Jesus at the center of my heart. I surrender to Him as Lord over my whole life.

I ask you now to flood my heart and soul with your Holy Spirit and to grant me the gift of new life. Give me the grace and courage to live as a missionary disciple for the rest of my days. Amen.

Contributors

Steve Dawson
Randy Grasso
Anne Harman
Brian Lee
Dr. Deb McManimon
John Michalik
Mark Nemecek
Beth Schuele
Stefan Swiko

Thank you to all of our team leaders and evangelists worldwide!

“How beautiful it is to see that young people are ‘street preachers’, joyfully bringing Jesus to every street, every town square and every corner of the earth!”

- Pope Francis

“The Church exists to evangelize.”

- Pope Paul VI