

Talk 5: Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Making the Invite

Pete Ascosi

1. The Personal and Parish Invitation

2. Where Does Jesus Send Us?

“There are no borders, no limits: he sends us to everyone. The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. Do not be afraid to go and to bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent. The Lord seeks all, he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love.”
- Pope Francis, World Youth Day, 2013

3. *Invite* by The SoundTank

4. Principles

a. Discovering Christ...

- i. Is for everyone
- ii. Takes us out of our comfort zone
- iii. Is evangelical by design
- iv. Provides a framework to shift from maintenance to mission
- v. Makes possible a paradigm shift

5. A Paradigm Shift is Needed

- a. For what percent of parishes is spreading the faith a high priority?
 - i. Protestant congregations
 - ii. African American congregations
 - iii. Catholic congregations

6. The Personal Invitation

- a. The most effective method for evangelization
- b. Springs from the joy of a living relationship with Jesus Christ
- c. Intercessory prayer is essential

- d. God asks for our cooperation
- e. Did I mention it takes us out of our comfort zone?
- f. Failure and faithfulness
- g. Sustained by a community of evangelizers

7. The Parish Invitation

- a. Assign someone to be the evangelization coordinator on your team
 - i. Provide resources and reminders for the team to engage in personal invitations
 - ii. Coordinate execution of parish invitation process
 - iii. Develop an action plan tailored to your parish size and demographics that includes communications to:
 - Entire parish community
 - Ministry leaders
 - Staff

8. Spreading the Word through the Parish

- a. Homilies
- b. Testimonies focused on life change not just promoting a program
- c. Discovering Christ Invitation Video
- d. Registration table
- e. Flyers or postcards
- f. Mailers to registered parishioners
- g. and/or neighborhood
- h. Web site and social media

9. Promotional Resources that are free

- a. “Free resources” at christlife.org/discover

- b. Logos, prayer cards, invite cards, flyers
- c. Contact Pete for additional help: pete@christlife.org or 410-531-7701

10. Promotional Resources that have a cost

- a. Outreach.com
- b. Postcards, mailers

11. Websites

- a. Basic description of program
- b. Video
- c. Weekly Schedule
- d. Registration form
- e. Examples
 - i. stlouisparish.org/discover
 - ii. olphparish.org/dc
 - iii. Google “Discovering Christ” and “Catholic”

12. Social Media

- a. Focus on using the social network(s) where your parish has an active presence
- b. Generate interest through periodic postings (text, images, videos) about the upcoming course

13. The Power of the Invitation

a. Changing lives

"The past seven weeks have been amazing. I feel so much closer to God, my prayer life has grown dramatically."

"This course helped me to open my heart to Jesus and ask him for forgiveness, strength and courage."

b. Transforming parishes

"Our Catholic faith is more exciting, more vibrant, and more effective in inspiring and attracting others to encounter ... Christ."

14. Invite 4 video by The SoundTank

15. Attracting People to Christ

"Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone. Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, they should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet. It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but 'by attraction'."
- Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, 15