

Proclaim'15

building missionary parishes



COMPANION FOR THE JOURNEY

"With Christ joy is constantly born anew... I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark on a new chapter of evangelisation marked with this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come." (*Evangelii Gaudium* 1). These words of Pope Francis are addressed to us all. Through the Proclaim '15 initiative, we are invited to respond generously to the Holy Father's request to make a new beginning in support of the building of missionary parishes. This ongoing missionary task takes us on an exciting, inspiring and, at times, challenging journey with the Lord. The Proclaim '15 resources provided have been produced as a **companion** to support you in the confident sharing of the joy of the Gospel, in your own way, at your own pace, according to the individual needs of your parish and community.

CHRIST
at the
CENTRE

"...someone who listens and does nothing is like the man who built a house on soil, with no foundations; as soon as the river bore down on it, it collapsed; and what a ruin that house became!" Luke 6: 49
These challenging words speak directly to those seeking to evangelise effectively. The Scriptures teach us again and again that Christ must be the source of all our endeavours if we are to successfully build local missionary communities and parishes. The parish missionary journey is always a movement for and with Christ – from him and to him.

How to use this resource

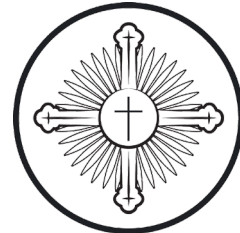
This resource was produced as a fruit of the **Proclaim '15 National Catholic Evangelisation Conference** in Birmingham on 11 July 2015. It captures key ideas, practical tips and learning taken from workshops that were delivered on the day to enable your local Catholic community to take new steps in service of parish mission. There are eleven packs in total, each offering insights and tips from a particular workshop. You are invited to explore the workshop topics, reflect how these will be beneficial to your parish and then consider the following:

- **Share this information with others in your parish - you are welcome to photocopy all the materials provided here**
- **Say the Proclaim '15 prayer together**
- **Choose one or two of the topics provided as a focus for your parish's mission**
- **Read and discuss the *Learning from Pope Francis* text provided in each pack**
- **Decide some new steps that you will take locally in response to what you read.**



PRAYER

Your Constant Companion



Food and Fuel for the Journey

Throughout Jesus's public ministry we observe that prayer was central to his life and mission. He frequently withdrew to pray. He taught his disciples how to pray, so that they would not only experience God's love and mercy, but would be fed spiritually for the great work of evangelisation that was being asked of them. Two thousand years on, it is the same for us today. We are also invited to recommit to the life of prayer as food and fuel for our journey with the Lord, and so become missionary disciples. This theme is repeated in all the Proclaim '15 resources.

Start with Prayer

It is no coincidence that Cardinal Vincent Nichols (Westminster) made prioritising prayer a central theme of his keynote address at the Proclaim '15 National Catholic Evangelisation Conference, saying: "To understand our mission then we have to go to the heart of God, the very mystery of the Holy Trinity, the inner life of God. This is spoken of as the Divine '*communio*' – the sharing within the mystery of the persons of God of divine life, love, truth, goodness and beauty. Only from within that inner heart of God does our mission arise. Only from that inner heart of God does our mission find its shape, its purpose, its energy. We are to do something beautiful; something that is of God; something that is for God. So, our mission always starts in our prayer, flows from prayer, from our daily openness to the great mystery of the life of God. It cannot start anywhere else."

Proclaim '15 Conference, 11 July 2015

Pray Before You Do

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) we read: "The Gospel according to St Luke emphasises the action of the Holy Spirit and the meaning of prayer in Christ's ministry. Jesus prays before the decisive moments of his mission: before his Father's witness to him during his Baptism and Transfiguration, and before his own fulfillment of the Father's plan of love by his Passion. He also prays before the decisive moments involving the mission of his apostles: at his election and call of the Twelve, before Peter's confession of him as 'the Christ of God,' and again that the faith of the chief of the Apostles may not fail when tempted. Jesus' prayer before the events of salvation that the Father has asked him to fulfill is a humble and trusting commitment of his human will to the loving will of the Father." (CCC 2600)

Proclaim Prayer

Please join Catholics all over England and Wales in making a humble and trusting commitment to the Lord by saying the Proclaim '15 prayer for the building of missionary parishes:

**Loving Father,
you so loved the world that you sent us
your only Son, that we might believe in
him and have eternal life.**

**May we encounter Jesus Christ anew this
day and live the Good News with joy.**

**Through the power of your Holy Spirit,
help us to "go out to the whole world and
proclaim" our faith with confidence.**

**Give us the courage to witness to the Joy
of the Gospel by our words and actions.**

**Help our parish to become more
welcoming and missionary, so that you
may be known and loved by all people.**

**We make this prayer through Our Lord
Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for
ever and ever, Amen.**

**Our Lady, Star of the New Evangelisation,
Pray for us.**

**Blessed John Henry Newman, Pray for us.
St Thérèse of Lisieux, Pray for us.**

**Be persevering in your prayers
and be thankful as you stay
awake and pray.**

Colossians 4:2

KEYS TO BECOMING A MISSIONARY PARISH



Key CALLED AND CHOSEN



Remember that God has called and chosen you to share the Good News of the Gospel. He is inviting you every day to be renewed through a personal encounter with his Son, Jesus Christ.



Key ALWAYS PRAY

Prayer should underpin the start, middle and end points of your missionary efforts. Prayer will sustain you throughout your journey.



Key GOD IS PRESENT

Your journey to becoming a missionary parish is not a search for Jesus; you are being called to walk alongside him. He is already here. Everywhere. All the time. He is your constant companion.



Key SHARE THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

The Gospel is the Word of the Lord. Be mindful of, and respect it, at all times. Read the Gospel, reflect upon it and be confident in sharing it joyfully with others.



Key INVITE OTHERS ON THE JOURNEY

Be open to everyone and invite them to join you on the journey of faith in a welcoming, friendly and non-judgemental way. Create opportunities for people to engage in ways that are appropriate to them and their needs.



Key LOVE IN ACTION

A loving action always bears fruit. God acts through you in every act of kindness great or small. Remember to live the message openly by being joyful when you help others.



Key SIMPLE ACTS DONE WELL

St Thérèse of Lisieux reminds us there is great evangelising power in simplicity. Avoid over complicating things and focus instead on doing simple things in the best possible way.



Key COMMUNICATION

Think about how the world is communicating today. If needed, enlist the help of those with "know how" to embrace and make the most of new media (e.g. website, Facebook, Twitter).

BUILDING A FAMILY-FRIENDLY PARISH

Learning from Pope Francis

“Each Christian family can first of all – as Mary and Joseph did – welcome Jesus, listen to him, speak with him, guard him, protect him, grow with him; and in this way improve the world. Let us make room in our heart and in our day for the Lord. As Mary and Joseph also did, and it was not easy: how many difficulties they had to overcome! They were not a superficial family; they were not an unreal family. The family of Nazareth urges us to rediscover the vocation and mission of the family, of every family. And, what happened in those thirty years in Nazareth, can thus happen to us too: in seeking to make love and not hate normal, making mutual help commonplace, not indifference or enmity. It is no coincidence, then, that ‘Nazareth’ means ‘She who keeps’, as Mary, who – as the Gospel states – ‘kept all these things in her heart’ (Luke 2:19, 51). Since then, each time there is a family who keeps this mystery, even if it were on the periphery of the world, the mystery of the Son of God, the mystery of Jesus who comes to save us, the mystery is at work. He comes to save the world. And this is the great mission of the family: to make room for Jesus who is coming, to welcome Jesus in the family, in each member: children, husband, wife, grandparents... Jesus is there. Welcome him there, in order that He may grow spiritually in the family.”

Pope Francis, Wednesday Audience, 17 December 2014



Tip

WE ARE FAMILY

Understand that a parish is a family of families. Recognise and seek ways of celebrating this by affirming regularly the presence of families in your parish community.

Tip

WELCOME DIFFERENCE

Families are diverse and other people's home lives don't necessarily look and sound like our own. Encourage different kinds of family units to share their testimony of faith at parish events.

Tip

WELCOMING IS INTENTIONAL

Welcoming families has to be consistent, intentional, and specific if we want to revive the domestic Church. The message of welcome to families needs to be part of our liturgy, on our websites, in our newsletters, part of our planning of events and written on our faces every day.

Tip

KNOW NAMES

Names are important. Knowing names increases our sense of belonging, especially for newcomers. Ensure that opportunities are provided to encourage families to mix and for people to learn a new name.

Tip

START WITH LOVE

Every parish has families in need within its neighbourhood. Coming to their aid is essential. It authenticates our witness and relieves suffering. Establish a group whose primary role is to identify families in need and to offer spiritual and material support. Mention the needs of families, in a way that safeguards privacy, in the prayers of intercession.

BUILDING A FAMILY-FRIENDLY PARISH



Tip

GET-TOGETHER

Plan an event for families which is sensitive to different age groups. Promote it well in advance and find ways to keep the costs down. Involve families in the planning. Consider organising a weekend away, a house Mass, or a "Family Day."



Tip

OFFER SUPPORT

Relationship courses and parenting programmes are available to support families. These include creative opportunities for questions of faith to be explored. Provide opportunities to equip parents to ask and deal with difficult questions of faith, not only to receive answers, but to build relationships.



Tip

TAP INTO RESOURCES

Use the resource pack, Home is a Holy Place, which helps families become more aware of how God is already alive and active in their homes. Look up www.cbcew.org.uk and search for Home-is-a-holy-place. Similarly, parents and grandparents need help as they try to pass on their faith to children. Look for Passing-on-the-Faith on the same website.



Tip

OUTREACH

Catholic schools provide opportunities for outreach. Consider how, through building relationships with your local Catholic school community, your parish might meet people who are less connected to the life of the Church. For ideas, read the Case Study by Dr Ann Casson available at www.cbcew.org.uk

Learning from Pope Francis

"The sacrament of marriage is a great act of faith and love: a witness to the courage to believe in the beauty of the creative act of God and to live that love that is always urging us to go on, beyond ourselves and even

beyond our own family. The Christian vocation to love unconditionally and without limit is what, by the grace of Christ, is also at the foundation of the free consent that constitutes marriage."

Pope Francis, Wednesday Audience, 6 May 2015

"Children have the capacity to smile and to cry. Some, when I pick them up to embrace them, smile; others see me dressed in white and think I am a doctor and that I am going to vaccinate them, and they cry... spontaneously! Children are like this: they smile and cry, two things which are often 'stifled' in grown-ups, we are no longer capable.... So often our smile becomes a cardboard smile, fixed, a smile that is not natural, even an artificial smile, like a clown. Children smile spontaneously and cry spontaneously. It always depends on the heart, and often our heart is blocked and loses this capacity to smile, to cry. So children can teach us how to smile and cry again. But we must ask ourselves: do I smile spontaneously, frankly, with love or is my smile artificial? Do I still cry or have I lost the capacity to cry? These are two very human questions that children teach us."

Pope Francis, Wednesday Audience, 18 March 2015