

Proclaim'15

building missionary parishes



Supplementary Small Group Materials

Prayers for use during a parish small group meeting to supplement the material on the Proclaim leaflets and / or to use in a Holy Hour.

You may choose to light a candle to start your session and / or play quietly some Christian background music; e.g. Taizé chant.

You may choose too to say some additional prayers during the sessions for the particular needs of your community.

Leaflet One

1) Loving Lord Jesus,
may we be open
to meeting with you heart-to-heart each day.
May these encounters transform us
and lead us more deeply
into the mystery of your presence.
Through the power of your life-giving
Holy Spirit, may we radiate your
presence so that others may be drawn
to the life of faith.
Amen.

2) Father of mercies and faithful God,
you have given us Jesus Christ, your Son, as our Lord and Redeemer.
He always showed compassion for children and for the poor,
for the sick and for sinners,
and he became a neighbour to the oppressed and the afflicted.
By word and deed, he announced to the world that you are our Father
and that you care for all your sons and daughters.
Open our eyes to the needs of our brothers and sisters;
inspire in us words and actions
to comfort those who labour and are burdened.
Make us serve them truly,
after the example of Christ and at his command.
And may your Church stand as a living witness
to truth and freedom,
to peace and justice,
that all people may be raised up to a new hope.
We make all our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(*Words taken from Eucharistic Prayer, "Jesus, who went about doing good."*)

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Leaflet Two

1) Loving Lord Jesus,
you call us to follow you into Life.
As we listen to your Word
may your life grow within us,
bringing us peace and deep joy.
May what we discover in you
stir us to reach out in love and service to others.
Amen.

2) Father, in this busy world, help us to be still.
May we always be ready to listen to your Word and to learn.
Help us to place the words and example of Jesus, your Son,
at the centre of all that we do.
He alone is The Way we are to walk,
The Truth that sets us free,
The Life that fills us with your joy and your peace.
We make our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord.
Amen.

Leaflet Three

1) Loving Lord Jesus,
You are the source of Truth and Life.
Through the grace of our baptism, and in response to your Word,
May we be compelled to respectfully and joyfully reach out to everyone we meet with compassion,
Always attentive to those in our midst most in need of help.
Amen.

2) Grant that all the faithful of the Church,
looking into the signs of the times by the light of faith,
may constantly devote themselves to the service of the Gospel.
Keep us attentive to the needs of all
that, sharing their grief and pain, their joy and hope,
we may faithfully bring them the good news of salvation
and go forward with them along the way of your Kingdom.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(From Eucharistic Prayer, "Jesus, the Way to the Father.")

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Supplementary Materials

Some supplementary paragraphs from *Evangelii Gaudium* with suggested questions for group discussion.

Leaflet One

For Pope Francis, evangelisation begins by sharing the basic message of the Gospel:

In catechesis too, we have rediscovered the fundamental role of the first announcement or kerygma, which needs to be the centre of all evangelising activity and all efforts at Church renewal... 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.” (164)

Thanks solely to this encounter – or renewed encounter – with God’s love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption. We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being. Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelisation. For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others? (8)

Questions

1. When do you feel reluctant to talk about your personal experience of prayer?
2. Do you feel you’re not very good at it and why?
3. Has prayer “liberated me from my narrowness and self-absorption”? (8)
4. Where and when do you encounter people’s questions and doubts in their search for Truth and the meaning of their human existence?
5. How can you be better equipped to respond to them?

Leaflet Two

The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelisers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed make them completely mission-oriented. (28)

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I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: "Give them something to eat" (*Mk 6:37*). (49)

Questions

1. Pope Francis uses an image of St John XXIII calling the parish "the village fountain where everyone could come and be quenched". How is your parish community a place of rest and nourishment?

We are called to be "God's leaven in the midst of humanity". (114)

1. What does this mean for you in your daily living?
2. And what does it mean for your parish?

Leaflet Three

We should not think that the Gospel message must always be communicated by fixed formulations learned by heart or by specific words which express an absolutely invariable content. This communication takes place in so many different ways that it would be impossible to describe or catalogue them all. (129)

If we want to advance in the spiritual life, then, we must constantly be missionaries. (272)

All around us we begin to see nurses with soul, teachers with soul, politicians with soul, people who have chosen deep down to be with others and for others. (273)

To believe in a Father who loves all men and women with an infinite love means realising that "he thereby confers upon them an infinite dignity". To believe that the Son of God assumed our human flesh means that each human person has been taken up into the very heart of God. To believe that Jesus shed his blood for us removes any doubt about the boundless love which ennoble each human being. (178)

Questions

1. Pope Francis clearly outlines that sharing the Gospel is not to be left to specialists or professionals, and that the Good News can be communicated in many different ways. In what ways do you share your faith in daily life?
2. As a parish community how are we fostering and nurturing "joyful messengers" and people whose "goodness and beauty" shines "forth in a life of fidelity to the Gospel"? (168)
3. How are we promoting "infinite dignity"? (178)

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Some suggested hymns to use during a Holy Hour or group meeting based on the content of the leaflets. Celebration for Everyone (CFE) Laudate (L); Hymns old and New (HoN)

Leaflet One: Meeting Jesus – the only one who can save me.

Be thou my vision	CFE 74	L 969	HoN 61
Christ be beside me	CFE 106	L 910	HoN 79
As the deer pants for the water	CFE 64	L 965	

Leaflet Two: Learning to be a missionary disciple – sitting at the feet of Jesus.

The Kingdom – Mike Anderson	CFE 702	L 816	
Stay with me, remain here with me		L 249	HoN 760
Love is His word	CFE 399	L 803	HoN 338
At the name of Jesus	CFE 59	L 762	HoN 50
There is a longing in our hearts	CFE 915	L 941	
Lord you have come to the seashore	CFE 395	L 871	
Be still for the presence of the lord	CFE 72	L 720	
Seek ye first	CFE 633	L 820	HoN 473
Love divine	CFE 398	L 801	HoN 337

Leaflet Three: Jesus is alive – go and tell my brothers.

A touching place	CFE 115	L 882	
The Lord's my Shepherd	CFE 706	L 806	HoN 533
Here am I Lord	CFE 285	L 865	HoN 712
God is love	CFE 215	L 794	HoN 178
Will you come and follow me	CFE 812	L 877	

Some suggested next steps for you or for your parish to take in response to what you have read.

For Catholics who attend church regularly:

- To help develop a community of “evangelisers” & to help people feel confident when talking with others about their faith: Start a Bible Study and / or prayer group, consider using a resource like CAFÉ or ALPHA for Catholics.
- To deepen our sense of belonging and community: There are people who sit near to each other in church for years but don't know each other's names. Address that by inviting people to introduce themselves to each other.
- To deepen our personal response to the Gospel and our gratitude for our own salvation: Invite people to share what their faith means to them and why they love being a Catholic.
- To support parents and grand-parents to communicate their faith with their families: See ‘Passing on the Faith’

<http://www.cbcew.org.uk/CBCEW-Home/Departments/Christian-Responsibility-and-Citizenship/Marriage-and-Family-Life/Passing-on-the-Faith>

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For Catholics who don't attend church regularly:

- To work with parents through our schools; e.g. invest in the Wednesday Word.
<http://www.wednesdayword.org>.
- Study and consider practical responses to the recent research from the Bishops' Conference about non-churchgoing Catholic parents.
<http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/News/2014/Schools-and-Parishes>
- Distribute invitations to events in church; e.g. St. Valentine's Day service for married or engaged couples, a blessing for those expecting babies or for new parents (St. Gerard Majella), offering healing services and/ or an event for all those baptised in the past year.
- Maintaining links with families after funerals, baptisms, weddings etc.; e.g. with the necessary permissions, creating an email distribution list and sending Christmas e-cards and invitations to social events. You could host a teaching Mass – with the parts explained and instructions given would be clear – when to stand, sit, kneel etc. Welcomers might wear name badges and familiar hymns could be sung.
- Invest in forming bereavement teams, training welcomers and resourcing marriage preparation teams who could also, among themselves, share good practice about evangelisation.
- Ministry to separated and divorced Catholics might be developed. It is common to hear people say that they didn't feel they could attend church any more after divorce.
- Reconciliation ministry – is fear of the Sacrament of Reconciliation an obstacle to some returning to regular church attendance? See:
<http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/Featured/Confession/What-s-Confession>
- Invite someone to help with a task in the parish. Let them know they are needed. Try to not be protective about your own job in church.
- Is there a way to reach out to those who use our clubs or parish centres but don't attend our churches? Do invitations to church events feature on the notice board, for example?
- Issue special invitations for Christmas, Easter, 2nd November, parish social events, to anyone who has taken part in a religious service in the past year or two.
- Put yourself in a non-churchgoer's shoes. What might it be like to come back to church after a long absence? What would you need help with? Ask people who attend Mass after an absence, or for the first time, how they got on and what it was like for them. Listen to what they tell you.
- What is in your church repository (shop)? On your leaflet stand? What will be helpful to people to take away from church with them if they visit for a baptism or a school event in church?
- Do your notice boards do their job of announcing, or do they look a bit tired and a bit chaotic?

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For non-baptised:

- Engage with the social issues that are of real concern in your community; e.g. seek to work with existing agencies / charities to help those suffering from addiction(s), to help those experiencing poverty, struggling with family life, those in debt, the lonely, unemployed and carers. Give a clear witness to the compassion of Christ. It is our calling and duty to love all our brothers and sisters in need.
- Work ecumenically in service of evangelisation; e.g. issue joint invitations for Christmas and Easter & organise inter-church carol singing.
- Hold some non-religious events; e.g. jumble and car boot sales, social events. Seek to meet and foster friendships with new people in your local community. Let the way that we live, speak and just are, provoke questions.

Supplementary materials prepared by the Vicariate for Evangelisation, Archdiocese of Liverpool.
www.catholicnews.org.uk/proclaim15

Proclaim '15 is an initiative of the Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It is being coordinated by the Department's Home Mission Desk.