

Ministry Resources for Evangelization: **An Overview**

Evangelization is a vital part of all youth ministry. *Ministry Resources for Evangelization* offers faith communities tools and program resources to evangelize youth. It offers practical strategies and ideas for outreach to young people, and contains twelve gathered sessions to share the Good News. It also contains a retreat to engage young people in becoming or continuing as disciples of Jesus.

Manual Contents: An Overview

Part A: Evangelizing Young People

Part A of *Ministry Resources for Evangelization* explores the central concepts of evangelization and includes resources in the form of articles and handouts to be copied and shared with team leaders. It also contains reflection questions to allow for either individual reflection or discussion.

Part B: Evangelization Strategies

Evangelization is not just about gathering young people and conducting sessions and programs to evangelize them. At the heart of a community's evangelization efforts are the intentional strategies and plans to reach out to youth. Whatever a community opts to do as it seeks to evangelize, it needs to include in its calendar and in its priorities strategies to reach out to young people. In this part of the manual you will find a diverse collection of evangelization strategies. Included in this section are highlights from *The Challenge of Catholic Youth Evangelization*, as well as ideas on how to evangelize by reaching out to uninvolved young people. You will also find pointers about building relationships with young people through hospitality, listening, and faith conversations.

Given the ongoing presence and importance of technology and media in the lives of young people, effective evangelization must make use of these resources. Strategies for the use of Web sites, newsletters, and e-mail postcards are included in this section as well. And finally you will find ideas for how to use sports as a way to build relationships with young people.

The second half of this section will assist you in creating and conducting your own evangelization sessions. You will find how-to ideas and a worksheet for designing and preparing an evangelization session, as well as some tips for effective storytelling and presenting the Gospel message.

Part C: Evangelization Sessions

The sessions found in this manual are approximately 60 minutes in length. You may present the sessions in this manual in its entirety, or you may select sessions and activities that you think will be best for the young people with whom you work. The sessions and activities are not sequential, so you may organize them in the way that is most appropriate for your situation.

Each session begins with a brief overview, a list of expected outcomes, a list of potential leadership roles, some ideas for inviting youth to the gathered sessions, and background reading that may include a list of scriptural connections and *Catholic Youth Bible* article connections. All articles are excerpted from the first edition of the *CYB*. The next element is a suggested schedule, which is to be used as a starting point and modified according to your circumstances. A checklist of the preparation required, including all materials needed, follows. A complete description of the session procedure is then provided, including a welcome and greeting, a warm-up activity, a personal story section, Scripture sharing, reflection and group discussion experiences, and a personal response by participants. In addition, all the activities can be enhanced by the creativity and expertise of the adult leader.

Experience It: Learning Experiences

This manual uses the expression “experience it” to describe the learning portion of each session. Evangelization is meeting Jesus, it is being invited into intimate communion with him. These sessions will enable the participants to experience Jesus in new and revitalizing ways. Some of the sessions provide a list of media resources—such as print, video, and Internet—for more exploration.

Pray It: Prayer Experiences

Each session includes opportunities and suggestions for prayer focused on the session's theme. Prayer forms include guided meditation, shared prayer, music, silence, prayer by young people, reflective reading, and experiences created by the participants. The Pray It component gives the young people an opportunity to bring their insights and concerns to God in prayer. The time frame for prayer experiences varies from 5 to 20 minutes.

Musical selections from *Spirit & Song* are often provided for your reference as well. A Bible concordance will provide additional citations if you want to add a more substantial scriptural component to a session, and music resources are available from a variety of publishers.

Live It: Options and Actions

This manual can be a springboard for connections with other youth ministry experiences. Therefore all its sessions include additional strategies to support the learning process. Those activities can be used to extend the session, provide good follow-up for the Experience It core activities, and allow for age-appropriate assimilation of the material. Family approaches provide simple, follow-up suggestions for family learning, enrichment, celebration, prayer, and service.

Session Overviews

Chapter 3: My Walk with God: Personal Experiences

- In this session the participants explore how God has been, is, and will be walking with them throughout their lifetime.

Chapter 4: The Good News: Created in God's Love

- This session will remind the participants that they are loved, formed, created, nurtured, longed for, searched for, and wanted by God. That is Good News.

Chapter 5: Meeting Jesus

- In this session the participants will come to know Jesus more fully through the people who came into contact with Jesus, as told in the Scriptures.

Chapter 6: Healed by Jesus

- This session will help the participants to define healing, explore Jesus' role in healing, and reflect upon the healing needed in their lives and in the world.

Chapter 7: Friendship in Jesus

- This session invites the participants to explore their friendships with others and with Jesus.

Chapter 8: Living as a Disciple Today

- This session will help the participants explore the challenges and gifts of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 9: Sharing Our Faith with Friends

- This session invites the participants to look at how the disciple Peter shared his faith and beliefs and how we continue to carry on that tradition.

Chapter 10: What Would Jesus Do? Gospel and Life Choices

- This session explores the temptations that Jesus faced and that we face, and challenges participants to keep their focus on Jesus in order to make good decisions.

Chapter 11: Weathering the Storms: Being Faithful Through Doubt

- In this session the participants walk with the Apostle Peter to explore the reality of doubt further.

Chapter 12: Faith in the Real World: Faith and Life

- This session incorporates a panel presentation on faith and life. The participants hear about the challenges that others face in living out their faith and come to own the challenges they themselves face.

Chapter 13: What Do You Believe? Faith Sharing

- This session is a safe and fun yet challenging opportunity for youth and their parents or caregivers to talk about what they believe and the challenges of daily living from those beliefs.

Chapter 14: Speaking the Good News: Skills of Faith Sharing

- This session helps adults remember the significant people and faith experiences from their own adolescence. This process will ultimately assist the participants in feeling more comfortable and confident in their role as a faith sharer.

Part D: Evangelization Retreat

This retreat incorporates chapters 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 into a retreat experience, complete with opening activities and prayer services. It is designed to help young people welcome God more fully into their lives and invites them to deepen their relationship with Jesus by responding to Jesus' invitation to "Come, follow me." Resource 16 is a comprehensive list of supplies needed for the retreat.