



Archdiocese of Southwark



Go and Announce the Gospel of the Lord

Handbook for Parish Evangelization Teams

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Go and Announce the Gospel of the Lord

*"I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities."
(Pope Francis - Evangelii Gaudium, 33)*

Produced by the Centre for Catholic Formation
Tooting Bec
with help from Fr John Mulligan

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Cover images: The Four Evangelists
(stained glass at St Thomas More, Bostall Park)

www.ccftootingbec.org.uk

Introduction

This handbook is intended for use in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Southwark and is directed towards the formation and operation of Parish Evangelization Teams. Its publication stems directly from the May 2014 diocesan Evangelization Conferences 'Go and Announce the Gospel of the Lord'. It comprises four parts:

Part 1 : Forming a Parish Evangelization Team

Practical suggestions for the composition and structure of the team that will initiate and oversee, though not necessarily itself perform, parish evangelization efforts.

Part 2: The Parish Evangelization Team Discernment Process

Whereby the team prayerfully discerns and selects the projects, which will form the basis of efforts in evangelization.

Part 3: Discernment Checklist

An examination of the gifts and resources of the parish to discern what is practical and desirable in terms of the parish's contribution to the spreading of the Good News in the local area. This Part also contains a list of questions that can be asked in terms of the needs of the parish and wider community.

Part 4: Good ideas and suggestions

A distillation of the points made in the deanery discussions at the May 2014 diocesan Area Evangelization Conferences.

This handbook and the suggestions contained herein are not to be considered exhaustive but a useful tool in parish discernment and evangelizing activity. It is also anticipated that it be a 'live' document and any further suggestions, case studies and success stories would be welcome for future revisions. If you would like to contribute a success story or case study please email [**office@ccftootingbec.org.uk**](mailto:office@ccftootingbec.org.uk).

Advice and assistance at any stage may be obtained from the Centre for Catholic Formation at Tooting Bec.

Fr David Gibbons (*Director of the Centre for Catholic Formation*)



Part 1: Forming a Team

Part 1: Forming a Parish Evangelization Team

- Invite between 6 to 12 people from the whole community to form a Parish Evangelization Team. If more emerge, welcome all as some may decide that it is not for them at this time. A fairly large group, however, is required to sustain momentum, generate a sense of purpose and build solidarity.
- A mixture of experienced parishioners regularly involved in parish life as well as 'new blood' would be good. The Team needs some members who know the parish well, some members who are creative and imaginative, and members who have an enthusiasm for evangelization and who are willing actually to do something and not simply talk about it.
- The age, gender and ethnic representation within the Team should reflect the parish community. The multi-cultural dimension of our diocese of Southwark is a gift to be celebrated.
- The Team will require a period of formation in (a) prayer, (b) aims, (c) pastoral engagement, (d) evaluation, and (e) a reflective exploration of their own understanding of the Gospel.
- While the support of the priest is essential, the leadership of the Team should be undertaken by one of the parishioners.
- Frequency of meetings needs to be determined – but every 6 – 8 weeks would be valuable to pray together, sustain momentum, establish a flexible strategy, share ideas and get to know and trust each other.
- The Team should be directly connected to the Parish Pastoral Council or other structure of the parish, as evangelization should be at the centre of all parish life. The Evangelization Team cannot operate in isolation.
- The Team will need a job description or terms of reference which is community based, Gospel driven and open to change. The Parish Priest will need to empower the Team to proceed with their mission, perhaps by a commissioning ceremony at Sunday Mass.
- A specific term in office - perhaps three years - would be helpful.



Part 2: The Discernment Process

Part 2: The Parish Evangelization Team Discernment Process

- As indicated in Part 1, a period of formation should be undertaken. This should include prayer, scripture study (such as Christ's teachings about spreading the Good News), and reflection on books or DVDs about evangelization. A list of resources can be found on p.4 of the Evangelization Conference brochure - a copy of which is available on the Evangelization page of the CCF website - and on p.23 of this booklet.
- The parish as a whole should be involved and consulted at an open meeting. This could take place early in the process, and/or part of the way through.
- The Team needs, after listening to the Holy Spirit, to consider the following aspects:
 - a) the gifts God has given the particular community (especially the gifts of the people of the parish);
 - b) the resources of the parish (the Church, a hall, a school, a secretary, musicians, parish groups, etc);
 - c) the socio-economic nature of the parish (eg immigrants, elderly people, young families);
 - d) any specific social needs of the area;
 - e) any recent or planned developments (eg a new estate, new immigrant groups);
- Having undertaken the discernment process, using the checklist in Part 3, the Team will select perhaps **two** projects to start. The Team should under no circumstances attempt to start too many projects at once: it is better to select a couple and ensure that sufficient energy and resources are devoted to them.
- The Team will not endeavour to do everything themselves. Having identified suitable projects, the Team should involve as many able and willing parishioners as possible. It may be appropriate that help is sought from neighbouring parishes if needed.

- The chosen evangelization projects will need prayerful and practical support from the Team, the priest, and the parish in general. Will those assisting in the project require some training or formation? What might the Team need in terms of physical resources?
 - Once the chosen projects are successfully under way (this may take a year or more), the Team can then go through the discernment process again to identify further evangelization projects. An injection of fresh blood into the Team may be required at that time.
 - The Team will need to consider how they might provide feedback on their progress, during or after the projects, to the whole parish community.
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“In first place, we can mention the area of ordinary pastoral ministry, which is ‘animated by the fire of the Spirit, so as to inflame the hearts of the faithful who regularly take part in community worship and gather on the Lord’s day to be nourished by his word and by the bread of eternal life’... Ordinary pastoral ministry seeks to help believers to grow spiritually so that they can respond to God’s love ever more fully.

“A second area is that of ‘the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism’. The Church, in her maternal concern, tries to help them experience a conversion which will restore the joy of faith to their hearts and inspire a commitment to the Gospel.

“Lastly, we cannot forget that evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him. All of them have a right to receive the Gospel. 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”.

(Pope Francis - Evangelii Gaudium, 15)

A black and white photograph of a long, arched hallway. The floor is tiled, and the walls are light-colored. On the right side, a large, dark, ornate door is open, revealing a bright light source. The hallway leads to a series of arches, creating a sense of depth and perspective. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights.

Part 3: Your Checklist

Part 3: Discernment Checklist

The Parish Evangelization Team can use the following checklist to analyse the gifts, resources, needs, and opportunities of the parish, and then select suitable evangelization projects. The checklist cannot be exhaustive, and Team members or other parishioners may have other good ideas.

Remember: the idea is that the Team evaluate the gifts and resources God has given the parish on the one hand (Section A), and examine the needs and challenges of the parish on the other hand (Section B), and then identify projects to link them up.

Do not be overwhelmed by the long lists. Two projects at a time would be more than enough.

A. What are the gifts and resources of the parish?

1. The Church (building).

Is the Church in a prominent position?

If not, could a leaflet or publicity campaign advertise the Church's presence? Is it worth paying for a road sign?

If it is, could people stand outside inviting passers-by into the Church?

Does the outside look appealing, well-kept, and loved?

Is the Church attractive or historic?

Following good publicity hold an Open Day.

Is there a local historical society or buildings open day you could tap into?

Is there good signage outside the Church, with clear information?

Can the Church be open for at least part of the day?

Can volunteer church-watchers be rostered? (Insurance and security need to be considered.)

Is there a good leaflet or other information about the Church and parish?

Are there catechetical guides or welcome packs?

Is the Narthex or Entrance welcoming? Is there clear information on display?

Do facilities such as toilets, hearing loop, provision for crying children, amplification system, etc need renovation? Where available how are these facilities promoted?

Is there full disabled access? (Where reasonable to do so this is required by law.)

2. The Liturgy.

Do people receive a friendly welcome when they come to Church?

Is the building warm and properly lit?

Are the Sunday Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation fully accessible to the disabled, the hard of hearing, and the blind?

Can the celebration of the Sunday Mass be improved?

Eg are the Readings well read?

Are as many people as possible involved in welcoming, singing, reading, ushering, etc?

Is there coffee after Mass? Is this used to build up community and to welcome visitors and newcomers?

Are new parishioners visited after their arrival in the parish?

Does the parish have printed Orders of Mass for those unfamiliar with the Liturgy?

Are House Blessings offered?

3. The Hall(s).

If the parish has a hall, what size is it and what facilities does it have?

Could it be used for a Mothers & Toddlers group, old people's Lunch club, after-school club, youth group or other social outreach activities?

What faith formation sessions could be held in it?

Does it have IT facilities for catechesis, formation or youth programmes?

Is the hall in need of redecoration or physical refurbishment?

4. The school(s).

What is the physical relationship between the church and the school?

What is the collaborative relationship?

Does the school have non-Catholics, or non-practising Catholics?

Does the school use *Wednesday Word* or another means of extending the Sunday Scriptures to the home?

How does the parish support the teachers in their mission? What training and formation might they require?

What can be done to improve the home/school/parish links?

If there is no school, what can be done to catechize children and involve families on a Saturday, weekday evenings or during school holidays?

5. Website & I.T.

Does the parish have a website?

If yes, is it up to date? Can it be improved? Can it be used to advertise events? Is it helpful to those enquiring about the Catholic faith?

If not, can you start one? Are there young people in the parish who would start and run a website?

Does the parish have good IT for catechetical programmes, youth groups, etc?

Do you use Facebook, Twitter and other social media? (If not, can young people assist with this?)

6. Catechesis & Faith Formation.

Are there gaps in your catechetical provision?

Can existing catechesis (for Baptism, Confirmation, First Holy Communion, RCIA, etc) be improved?

How are parents involved in their children's catechetical programmes?

What adult faith formation takes place? Is it systematic, regular or occasional?

Would house groups or cell groups be suitable in your parish?

7. Parish organisations and groups.

List **all** the various groups and activities (musicians, servers, Legion of Mary, catechists, cleaners, Justice & Peace group, youth group, uniformed groups, SVP, and so on).

How might each of these groups engage in evangelization?

Which of these would attract new people, and how would they attract them?

Are there groups for young people, young adults, the retired, parents and families, single people?

8. Stewardship.

Does the parish practise Stewardship, of time, talents and treasure?

If not, could a survey be taken of parishioners' talents and interests?

9. Other.

Are there any other gifts and resources the parish has to offer?

"I invite all Christians, everywhere to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them... The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk."

(Pope Francis - Evangelii Gaudium, 3)

B. What are the 'target groups' and needs of the parish?

1. The (geographical) parish.

Is the parish compact or spread out? Is it urban or rural, inner-city, suburban?

Is part of the parish separate? Or is there an area from which no-one comes? Is there a new housing estate?

If so, can a special mission (house visiting) be undertaken in that area?

2. The socio-economic nature of the parish, and social outreach.

What are the main groupings in the parish (e.g. retired, families, workers)?

Are there immigrant groups, and if so, which? What are their particular needs, and to what would they respond?

What is the nature of the housing: municipal, owner-occupier? Is the population transient or settled?

Do people work locally or commute?

Are there local organisations (such as a local homelessness organisation) with which parishioners might become involved? Is there a foodbank?

Can support groups be offered (to all local people, not just Catholics) to carers, the disabled and those with special needs, the lonely, the unemployed, etc?

Can something be organised for young people with nowhere to go? (Compliance with Safeguarding requirements will be necessary.)

Can legal and practical assistance be offered to people such as immigrants, asylum seekers, people with mental health issues?

3. Parish organisations and groups.

What groups would it be especially desirable or feasible to establish in the parish?

Can a group to support family life be established?

Can a Justice & Peace group be established?

Would a group for the elderly (such as Ascent) be useful?

Can support be given to separated and divorced people?

A men's group?

A bereavement support network?

How would you advertise such groups to the intended target?

4. Hospitals & other institutions in the parish.

If there is a hospital, hospice or old peoples' home(s), what spiritual and practical help can be offered? Is regular contact maintained with these institutions?

If there is a university or college, what chaplaincy work can be offered? What events can be organised to make contact with students?

What contact is possible with non-Catholic schools? Can they be invited to visit the Church?

What about local prisons and asylum centres?

5. The lapsed.

Is contact made with those who have had children Baptized, perhaps a year later or some other regular basis?

Is contact maintained with those recently married in church?

Could a team visit the homes of families in which someone has been Confirmed, or received First Holy Communion, etc?

Could the parish hold celebrations for those who have received the sacraments in the preceding year (eg a Marriage Mass on St Valentine's Day, inviting all those Baptized to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord)?

Is contact made with those who have sought admission to Catholic schools (including any who have failed to gain admission)?

Can a special invitation be sent out (to a special Mass with a social afterwards, or before Christmas or Easter)?

6. Reaching out.

Is leafleting part or all of the parish feasible?

Could a newsletter be put through letterboxes of houses in the parish?

Could a team of visitors to knock on doors be organised?

Could a major event be held to invite people to?

Is there a local festival or meeting at which the parish could have a presence or a stall?

Is it worth making contact with local councillors and other community leaders?

Can you make use of the local press?

Can something be done ecumenically, with other ecclesial communities?

What can be done to help parishioners witness to the Gospel in their daily lives (discussions, newsletter items, homilies)?

Don't be afraid to ask the priest to preach about witnessing in our daily lives.

Accompaniment (walking alongside) is a key aspect in evangelization. How might parishioners be encouraged to engage in one-to-one accompaniment?

7. Other.

Are there any other target groups or needs which should be addressed?

"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. 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."

(Pope Francis - Evangelii Gaudium, 49)



Part 4: Ideas and Suggestions

...will wear... is...
...body more important...
...the at; they do not sow...
...and yet your heavenly Father...
...much more valuable than they? 27-29
...you worry about labor or spin...
...They do not labor or spin...
...how God clothes the...
...and the you. O...
...leave do...
...are invited...
...time and...
...Does Je...
...6:25)

Part 4: Good ideas and suggestions

This is a distillation of some of the points made in the deanery discussion groups at the three Evangelization Conferences held in May 2014.

General

- Hold a parish day on *Evangelii Gaudium* and on how we might evangelize.
- Evangelization is a process not a task. It is about enabling people to see, hear and experience the Good News. It is about a personal relationship with Christ.
- We need to focus on the 'Gaudium' (i.e. 'Joy'). The most important thing is to enable people to know that they are loved beyond measure.
- We need to use immediate, not ecclesial, language and speak about God.
- Evangelization is "one beggar telling another beggar where to find food."
- All parishes should have an updated database / census of parishioners.
- Parishes that are growing have a mastery of social media.
- Have Evangelization as an ongoing agenda item on Deanery, DPC and Parish Council Agendas.
- We must take the initiative and be bolder!

Prayer & Liturgy

- Contemplative prayer is as an important beginning to evangelization as prayer changes us and then that affects our behaviour.
- Many parishes are imbalanced in their prayer lives: they need more Adoration.
- A parish that celebrates attracts people who do not go to Mass.
- Parishioners need to be evangelized so that they know their faith better, this could be done through beautiful Liturgy, Sacred art, and a greater understanding of Doctrine.

- Many people do not know how to pray: they need to be taught.
- We need to note people in Church as to whether they are newcomers and welcome them.

Justice & Peace

- Justice and Peace groups and events that invite people to share food are seen as great opportunities for evangelization.
- Street pastors do a wonderful job.
- Soup run.
- Visit the sick or lonely.

Immigrant communities

- Immigrant communities tend to gather together for worship which includes staying together after Mass often for a meal and to be in each other's company. They are examples of good outreach, often inviting people who are not Catholics but who are still included as members of the community.
- Immigrant communities can refresh a parish which is open to learning.

Groups

- Small neighbourhood groups are a good way for people to build relationships and explore areas of faith where support and information are found.
- Ecumenical Lent groups are one way of reaching out to others.
- Bereavement groups to support the widows/widowers, orphans etc.
- Special Masses for those who have either had miscarriages or their babies or a child has died.
- A monthly theology discussion group (perhaps in a pub) for young adults.

Schools

- Schools are the unseen vehicles of evangelization. Lay Chaplains are as essential as the Priest.
- Catholics going into schools (Catholic and non-Catholic) and talking about their faith.

Young people

- Cyber evangelization.
- Give young people responsibility, for collections, fair-trade, I.T., ministry.
- Shared deanery events - socials and youth Masses - for young people.
- Involve young people in music ministry and music outside of the Liturgy.

Other

- One parish has a monthly newsletter, delivered to all the homes in the parish, including a message welcoming Catholics back to the Church.
- One parish delivers postcards in an area, saying that the church is praying for people in their street that month and inviting people to contact the church for any reason.
- A Deanery Mission last year got people together & raised awareness.
- One parish had a stall publicising the church to the neighbourhood at a community event.
- Going out in pairs to knock on doors and invite people to come to church (eg the Legion of Mary).
- Keep a list of lapsed Catholics and visit those on the list and invite them to Christmas and Easter services.
- RCIA needs promoting: small banners on the church railings advertising the RCIA, or newspaper ads.
- One parish has regular gatherings in the town square, proclaiming the Gospel through dancing and singing.
- Some parishes have processions through the streets.

Some Suggested Resources

Books & DVDs

Pope Francis - *Evangelii Gaudium* (CTS, £4.95)

St Pope John Paul II - *Redemptoris Missio* (CTS, £3.95)

Bl Pope Paul VI - *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (www.vatican.va, as above two)

Fr Stephen Wang - *The New Evangelization* (CTS, £2.50)

Fr Robert J Hater - *Parish Guide to the New Evangelisation*
(Redemptorist Publications, £9.95)

Mary Carol Kendzia - *Catholic Update Guide to the New Evangelization*
(Redemptorist Publications, £3.95)

Cardinal Donald Wuerl - *New Evangelization* (Redemptorist, £3.25)

Ronald D Witherup - *Saint Paul and the New Evangelization*
(Redemptorist, £11.99)

John & Therese Boucher - *Sharing the Faith that you love*
(Redemptorist, £7.95)

Sherry A Weddell - *Forming Intentional Disciples* (Our Sunday Visitor, £10.50)

Sherry A Weddell - *Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples* (Our Sunday Visitor, £9.87)

George Weigel - *Evangelical Catholicism* (Basic Civitas Books, £15.99)

Archbishop Bernard Longley - *DVD: The New Evangelisation*
(Redemptorist, £10.00)

Fr Robert Barron - *DVD Catholicism: the New Evangelization*
(Word on Fire, c/o europe.wordonfire.org \$59.95)

The Joy of the Gospel DVD CaFE (faithcafe.org, £24.95)

Paul Cannon and Sharon Beech - *Welcome to Witness: Becoming an evangelising parish* (Redemptorist, £7.95)

Some Suggested Resources Continued

Books & DVDs

Michael White and Tom Corcoran - *Rebuilt* (Ave Maria, £11.99)

Anthony Doe - *The Call to Evangelise* (CTS, £2.50)

James Mallon - *Divine Renovation: Bringing your parish from Maintenance to Mission* (Twenty-Third Publications, £13.99)

Scott Hahn - *Evangelizing Catholics: A Mission Manual for the New Evangelization* (Our Sunday Visitor, £12.99)

Websites

www.cbcew.org.uk/home-mission

www.21stcenturycatholic-evangelization.org

www.catholicity.com/links/121

www.pemdc.org

Diploma in the New Evangelization

www.schooloftheannunciation.com (click on Courses)

“The Lord’s missionary mandate includes a call to growth in faith: ‘Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you’ (Matthew 28:20). Hence it is clear that the first proclamation also calls for ongoing formation and maturation. Evangelization aims at a process of growth which entails taking seriously each person and God’s plan for his or her life. All of us need to grow in Christ. Evangelization should stimulate a desire for this growth, so that each of us can say wholeheartedly: ‘It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me’ (Galatians 2:20).”

(Pope Francis - Evangelii Gaudium, 160)

Notes

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This handbook is intended for use in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Southwark and is directed towards the formation and operation of Parish Evangelization Teams. Its publication stems directly from the May 2014 diocesan Evangelization Conferences 'Go and Announce the Gospel of the Lord'. Other dioceses, parishes and organisations are welcome to use and circulate this resource.

Also downloadable from the www.ccftootingbec.org.uk website and available in large print format on request.

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*Evangelization and Catechesis
in the Mission of the Church*