

Lent 2007



Small Faith Sharing Group
Reflection Guide
Cycle C



Developed by
The Office For
Evangelization
& the Advisory
Committee on
Evangelization

Archdiocese of Chicago
155 E. Superior Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
312.751.5353
www.goingforth.org

Introduction

This 2007 Small Faith-Sharing Group Reflection Guide is prepared for small faith-sharing group members in Catholic parishes and communities. The Reflection Guide combines Cycle C readings of the Sunday Lectionary with meditations, reflection questions and the Objectives from the Personal Mandate of Spreading the Holy Fire: A Plan for Catholics Evangelizing in the Archdiocese of Chicago (available on-line at www.goingforth.org)

This Season of Lent marks the season of change and renewal that comes before the Church celebrates the Easter mysteries. This Season offers a time to reflect on how we are living as Jesus' disciples and to make changes to grow deeper in love with God and other people.

Each week of Lent offers the grace to gather with other disciples of Christ. As we encounter Jesus in a new way, we grow to *believe* more deeply in Him. Our shared experience and belief empower us to *share* our faith with others. Together, we take our deepened belief into personal relationships in family, friends, the workplace, our parish, neighborhoods and nation to *transform* the world into God's Reign: a kinder, better, more loving place. Believe, share, transform: this is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, to be a Catholic, and to evangelize.

As a member of a small faith-sharing group, you will gather weekly with others to grow in faith. Be open to the process of growth that comes from sharing. Be open to the gift of holiness. Take responsibility for your own participation and encourage others to take part. The entire group benefits and grows together. As a small group member, please follow these guidelines:

- Prepare** Get ready for the meetings by reading the Scriptures and reflection material before the meeting.
- Participate** Pray. Read the Scriptures when asked. Respond aloud to the reflection questions. However, you may choose to "pass" at any time without explanation.
- Pray** Pray for the group leader, the other members of the group, and for yourself between meeting times.
- Be Present** Attend all meetings unless pressing circumstances prevent it.
- Be Personal** Talk about your own experience and share your own thoughts about how God speaks to you through the Scripture. Listen to the stories of others in the group and refrain from giving advice.
- Be Confidential** What is shared in the group stays in the group. Realize that some areas may be too sensitive for people to respond to the faith-sharing questions or share an insight.
- Be Gentle** If differences of opinion arise, respect those differences. There are as many ways to experience God's presence as there are people. We are all growing and on the journey together. Make the effort to understand another's viewpoint by being tender and kind. (Ephesians 4:15).

May this Lent be a rich experience of God's love that so fills you with joy and peace so that you can easily share God's love with others.

Cycle C

The Gospel of Luke

Insights on Evangelization

The Scripture readings for the 2006-2007 Liturgical Year are from Cycle C of the Sunday Lectionary. In Cycle C, Sunday liturgies draw their Gospel readings from Luke.

Author/Audience

The Gospel of Luke is believed to be the latest of the three Synoptic Gospels to be written (The Gospels of Mark and Matthew appeared earlier.) The authorship of the Gospel is uncertain. Modern research proposes that the author was a third-generation Christian, who compiled narratives of Mark and Matthew, along with other sources, to write his account. The tone of Luke's Gospel suggests that the good news of salvation and the story of Jesus are for everyone.

Message and Themes

Luke's Gospel is the only one of the four Gospels that has a second volume, the Book of Acts. Luke's writing style and use of Greek suggest a highly educated author who blended the entire Gospel into a compelling story of Jesus' universal mission to all people. The Gospel provides extensive infancy narratives, each carefully told to include Old Testament references that allude to God's intention to provide salvation to all people.

Luke's Gospel includes much detailed information about Jesus, including his long journey to Jerusalem with his disciples. Jesus' disciples play an important role and identity in proclaiming the Reign of God. After Jesus' resurrection, Luke includes significant interaction between Jesus and his disciples (appearances in Emmaus, Jerusalem and account of Jesus' ascension.)

Some of Luke's main themes include celebration and joy (the Magnificat, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the banquet of Zaccaeus.) Jesus is both healer and teacher who offers many parables about the Reign of God. Jesus offers salvation to all and invites all to serve with him (the Good Samaritan, the role of women, Martha and Mary, and more.) Luke's Gospel pays particular attention to the compassion of Jesus toward the poor and suffering. Luke's Gospel lays the foundation for Mary as the first disciple of Jesus and her devotion to God.

How the Gospel of Luke Relates to Evangelizing

As in Luke's Gospel, we are disciples of Jesus, who calls us to an important role in announcing the gospel in our times. Consider these key insights from Luke's Gospel for evangelizing:

- Believe:** In Chapter 2, verse 29, Simeon took the infant Jesus into his arms and blessed God, "...For my eyes have seen your salvation which you prepared in sight of all the peoples..." How do I bless God for Jesus' presence in my life?
- Share:** In Chapter 10, verses 1-12, Jesus sends 72 disciples ahead of him to cure the sick and announce the kingdom of God. They went and did what Jesus commanded. Where do I go to prepare the way for Jesus' visit to other people?
- Transform:** In Chapter 19, verse 5, Jesus addressed Zaccaeus to come down from his tree so that Jesus could stay at his house that day. How do I reach out to the unwelcome, the unpleasant, and the unloved to bring about restoration and redemption?

Source: Fr. Donald Senior, C.P. and PHEME PERKINS, *Gospel of Luke, Reading Guide, The Catholic Study Bible, New American Bible, Oxford Press, pages RG417-RG437, pages 95-96.* See these articles for more detail about the Gospel of Luke.

Introduction to All Small Faith Sharing Sessions

PREPARE THE ENVIRONMENT

Optional: Prepare a small table and enthrone a cross and a Bible or set up some other faith symbol that represents the season. Put a small basket or bowl on the table. Have small note cards and pens available. Use this or another centerpiece that symbolizes celebrating God's coming into our lives in a deeper and new way during this Season.

BECOME ACQUAINTED

Go around the group with each person sharing his or her hopes for the meeting.

GATHER TOGETHER IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Leader: As we gather together, we recall how God has come into our lives this past week and how God is present in our midst now.

After a moment of silence, ask the Holy Spirit to empower you and the group:

*Come Holy Spirit,
Fill the hearts of all people with the fire of Your Love.
May all accept Your invitation to know and love Jesus as Lord and Savior.*

*Fill this Archdiocese with people who welcome
and invite others to share in the Catholic faith.
Fill our Cardinal, our bishops and priests, deacons and lay ministers
with wisdom and courage to live and
preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
Fill all parish and agency staff with Your power to
evangelize those whom they serve.*

*Fill all consecrated men and women and all lay people with the grace
to become and make disciples of Jesus through
prayer, work, and daily living.
May the holy fire of Your love transform our society according to the Gospel.*

*Come Holy Spirit! With the Father and the Son,
You are worshiped and glorified forever and ever. Amen.*

EXTEND GOD'S INVITATION

On a notecard, write the name(s) of loved ones and those who are absent from the Church who may need to experience a new coming of God's Reign of love, peace, and justice. Place the cards in the bowl or basket on the table.

REFLECT AND SHARE

With the exception of March 25, the Gospel readings for Cycle C are from the Gospel of Luke. Reflect on each question below in turn or use your own questions. Allow group members, if they wish, to answer that question before the group moves on to the next question.

February 25, 2007

First Sunday of Lent

READ THE SCRIPTURES

Read the Sunday Scriptures out loud together. Afterwards, mention which Scripture passage touched you and why. What does the passage mean to you at this stage of your personal spiritual journey?

1st Reading: Deuteronomy 26:4-10

2nd Reading: Romans 10:8-13

Gospel: Luke 4:1-13

Reflection on the Gospel Reading

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus was led into the desert for 40 days to be tempted by the devil. After eating Jesus had eaten nothing during that time, the devil put Him to the test in three situations. In all three tests, Jesus remained faithful to God's will, using the Hebrew Scriptures to answer the temptations posed by the devil. Each test challenged Jesus to trade His trust in God for another source of fulfillment by misusing His power. In each of these, Jesus remained faithful to His Father.

Reflection Questions:

Believe: As I begin the season of Lent, what areas of my life are spiritual wildernesses? What growth do I hope to gain this Lent?

Share: How do I study and share Scripture in a way that edifies God and increases my understanding of God's will for me?

Transform: What are the "wilderness" areas in my family, work, parish, community and world that I feel a personal call to avoid? With God's power, what areas might I transform?

PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Pray together for any petitions and any needs that you might have. Stand in a circle together and say the Our Father. Pray daily this week for the person on your right.

LEAVE TO EVANGELIZE YOUR WORLD

Reflect on your mission to grow deeper in your relationship with God. Be welcoming, offer hospitality and work for transformation in your daily life. Suggestions for this coming week:

Believe: As you enter the Season of Lent, reflect on what aspect of your relationship with God can grow and flourish.

Share: As you enter the Season of Lent, imagine what new ways you can share your faith with others.

Transform: As you enter the Season of Lent, identify one area where you can bring about a fuller expression of God's Reign.

March 4, 2007

Second Sunday of Lent

READ THE SCRIPTURES

Read the Sunday Scriptures out loud together. Afterward, mention which Scripture passage touched you and why. What does the passage mean to you at this stage of your personal spiritual journey?

1st Reading: Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

2nd Reading: Philippians 3:17-4:1

Gospel: Luke 9:28b-36

Reflection on the Gospel Reading

This week's Gospel contains Luke's version of the story of Jesus' transfiguration. Jesus and His disciples went up the mountain to pray. During that prayer, Jesus' appearance became radically different. All clothed in glory, Jesus spoke with Moses and Elijah. The disciples were overcome with sleep, but when they woke up, they saw the glory of all three. A cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud, a voice pronounced Jesus as the chosen Son, and commanded the disciples to listen to Him. Then, they found Jesus alone.

Reflection Questions:

Believe: How would I feel if I were Peter, James or John encountering Jesus' glory on the mountaintop? How would I feel if I saw Jesus' glory today?

Share: How do I feel about sharing a faith experience like witnessing a transfiguration like that of the disciples with this group, my family or friends?

Transform: In what areas does the world need to wake up to see the glory of Jesus? What would that look like?

PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Pray together for any petitions and any needs that you might have. Stand in a circle together and say the Our Father. Pray daily this week for the person on your right.

LEAVE TO EVANGELIZE YOUR WORLD

Reflect on your mission to grow deeper in your relationship with God. Be welcoming, offer hospitality and work for transformation in your daily life. Suggestions for this coming week:

Believe: In prayer, imagine that you experience the glorified Presence of Christ. Listen to Him.

Share: Join a small faith sharing group and share the experience of Christ's Presence in and among you.

Transform: This week, look for an opportunity to help someone in need.

March 11, 2007

Third Sunday of Lent

READ THE SCRIPTURES

Read the Sunday Scriptures out loud together. Afterwards, mention which Scripture passage touched you and why. What does the passage mean to you at this stage of your personal spiritual journey?

1st Reading: Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15
2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12
Gospel: Luke 13:1-9

Reflection on the Gospel Reading

Today's Gospel passage from Luke focuses on the need for and process of conversion, using a story of local news and a parable of a gardener. Some people told Jesus local news about the tragic murder and desecration when Pilate killed people from Jesus' native country, Galilee, and mixed their blood with sacrificial blood to pagan gods. The Jewish understanding of that time was that God punished sinners for their guilt – the greater the guilt, the greater the punishment. Jesus replied that the Galileans were no more guilty than anyone else, and even told the story of 18 people killed at Siloam. The choice was to repent or perish as they did. The parable of the fig tree and the gardener carries this theme further, but adds a dimension of mercy. The owner called for the unproductive tree to be cut down (perish.) The gardener interceded for the fig tree to give it another chance, but if it did not bear fruit, it would be cut down.

Reflection Questions:

- Believe:* What do I believe about repentance and change? How do I participate actively in the process?
- Share:* As a community of believers, how do we live out the process of repentance and change? What spiritual gifts do we need to practice?
- Transform:* What areas of society need repentance and change? What would those changes look like?

PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Pray together for any petitions and any needs that you might have. Stand in a circle together and say the Our Father. Pray daily this week for the person on your right.

LEAVE TO EVANGELIZE YOUR WORLD

Reflect on your mission to grow deeper in your relationship with God. Be welcoming, offer hospitality and work for transformation in your daily life. Suggestions for this coming week:

- Believe:* Examine your conscience. Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and repent of sinful actions.
- Share:* Examine your relationships. Which ones need a little gardening of care, kindness and concern. Pick one and cultivate greater love and kindness.
- Transform:* Examine your actions regarding public service. What needs doing that you can contribute toward? Pick an activity and get going.

March 18, 2007

Fourth Sunday of Lent

READ THE SCRIPTURES

Read the Sunday Scriptures out loud together. Afterwards, mention which Scripture passage touched you and why. What does the passage mean to you at this stage of your personal spiritual journey?

1st Reading: Joshua 5:9a, 10-12

2nd Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3,11-32

Reflection on the Gospel Reading

In today's Gospel, the evangelist begins the account by describing an act of hospitality that is central to the mercy of Jesus, welcoming sinners and eating with them. The tax collectors and sinners, despised by Jewish religious leaders, were attracted to Jesus and listened to Him. When the leaders complained about Jesus' presence to the outcasts, Jesus told the parable of a father and two sons. One son left his father with a share of the family inheritance, squandered it and returned as a beggar. His father took him back without hesitation and restored that son to full communion in the family. The older son complained bitterly about a feast in his brother's honor and would not welcome his brother back. The father replied that celebration and rejoicing were necessary, because the younger son had returned to life and had been found.

Reflection Questions:

Believe: How do I feel about the passage in today's Gospel? What are the consequences of conversion for those who never leave?

Share: What do I think about the return of inactive Catholics to the Church? How can I encourage their return?

Transform: What aspects of this Gospel apply to reconciled relationships within marriages, families and communities? What does this Gospel mean for transforming society?

PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Pray together for any petitions and any needs that you might have. Stand in a circle together and say the Our Father. Pray daily this week for the person on your right.

LEAVE TO EVANGELIZE YOUR WORLD

Reflect on your mission to grow deeper in your relationship with God. Be welcoming, offer hospitality and work for transformation in your daily life. Suggestions for this coming week:

Believe: In prayer, relive today's Gospel. Choose any of the characters in the story and reflect on those insights you gain.

Share: Celebrate the presence of a family member with whom you are estranged with a phone call or personal note. Work toward reconciliation.

Transform: Identify one of society's "prodigal" activities. Do something to affirm the life-giving opposite.

March 25, 2007

Fifth Sunday of Lent

READ THE SCRIPTURES

Read the Sunday Scriptures out loud together. Afterwards, mention which Scripture passage touched you and why. What does the passage mean to you at this stage of your personal spiritual journey?

1st Reading: Isaiah 43: 16-21
2nd Reading: Philippians 3:8-14
Gospel: John 8:1-11

Reflection on the Gospel Reading

This week's Gospel from John portrays an encounter between Jesus, the people, Jewish religious leaders and a woman who had been caught in adultery. Jesus was teaching in the temple area when the woman was brought before Him. In an attempt to discredit Jesus and quoting the Law of Moses to stone the woman, the Pharisees and scribes called Jesus, "Teacher" and asked Him what He might say. When Jesus seemed to ignore their question, they continued to ask him. Finally, Jesus replied that anyone without sin was free to cast the first stone. Not one person did. The elders and the accusers went away one by one, so that the woman was alone with Jesus. Jesus sent her away without condemning her, and admonished her not to sin again.

Reflection Questions:

- Believe:* Is it easy or hard for me to let a wrongdoer go "free" without condemning him or her? How do I feel when I am on the receiving end of condemnation?
- Share:* How do the dynamics of condemnation and forgiveness play out in relationships with family and friends? What are practical ways to "send people away" without condemning them?
- Transform:* How do the truths and practices from today's Gospel speak to relationships between nations, races, and creeds? What are some small steps we can take to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation?

PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Pray together for any petitions and any needs that you might have. Stand in a circle together and say the Our Father. Pray daily this week for the person on your right.

LEAVE TO EVANGELIZE YOUR WORLD

Reflect on your mission to grow deeper in your relationship with God. Be welcoming, offer hospitality and work for transformation in your daily life. Suggestions for this coming week:

- Believe:* Write on the ground of your soul by seeking help with a sinful habit. Ask Jesus for mercy and grace to overcome it.
- Share:* Write on the ground of your neighborhood. Visit the unpopular, the shut-in or the difficult neighbor with a small peace offering gift.
- Transform:* Write on the ground of the nation. Send a letter to affirm and encourage someone serving in the Armed Forces or public office.

April 1, 2007

Palm Sunday

READ THE SCRIPTURES

Read the Sunday Scriptures out loud together. Afterwards, mention which Scripture passage touched you and why. What does the passage mean to you at this stage of your personal spiritual journey?

1st Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7

2nd Reading: Philippians 2:6-11

Gospel: Luke 22:14-23:56

Reflection on the Gospel Reading

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke contains unique images and events not found in the Passion narratives of the other Gospels. At the Last Supper, Jesus' dialog with his disciples contained His teaching on being a servant. Jesus' agony in the garden experienced such an intensity that an angel comforted Him, while His disciples slept. Jesus' healed the high priest's servant's severed ear. Pilate interceded with the crowd three times before releasing Jesus to be crucified. The two thieves were crucified with Him, one uttering condemnation, the other presenting a plea for Jesus' mercy, and receiving Jesus' assurance of being with Him in Paradise. At Jesus' death, the Roman centurion glorified God by acclaiming Jesus' innocence. The removal and burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea was chronicled along with how the woman disciples of Jesus attended to burial details.

Reflection Questions:

Believe: How has this Lent been a life-changing experience for me? How did I grow as a disciple of Jesus?

Share: How has our small faith sharing group grown during this Lent? How have we grown as a small Christian community?

Transform: What does the Passion of Jesus mean for our world? Where do I feel called to be an ambassador of mercy to bring about God's Reign?

PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Pray together for any petitions and any needs that you might have. Stand in a circle together and say the Our Father. Pray daily this week for the person on your right.

LEAVE TO EVANGELIZE YOUR WORLD

Reflect on your mission to grow deeper in your relationship with God. Be welcoming, offer hospitality and work for transformation in your daily life. Suggestions for this coming week:

Believe: As the Season of Lent ends and Holy Week begins, take time to partake of the Triduum to praise, thank and worship God.

Share: As the Season of Lent ends, look back on how you shared your faith journey with others. Make a promise and a plan to share your faith this week with others.

Transform: As the Season of Lent ends, look back on how you have acted to transform society toward God's Reign. Choose one activity to do on a regular basis from this day forward.

Afterword

Renewal of Baptismal Vows/ Profession of Faith

I reject sin so as to live in the freedom of God's children.

I reject the glamour of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin.

I reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead and is now seated with the Father.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead

Comments are Welcome

Thank you for participating in these small faith-sharing group sessions, reflecting on Scripture in the light of evangelization. By virtue of baptism, everyone is called to evangelize. If you are interested in working in evangelization in a greater way, ask your pastor about joining a Parish Evangelization Team or participating in an outreach ministry at your parish.

The Office for Evangelization would appreciate your comments, experiences, thoughts and ideas on what you or your group has learned through the small-faith sharing process. You may write, call, fax or e-mail comments to:

Office for Evangelization
Archdiocese of Chicago
155 E. Superior Street
Chicago, IL 60611
Voice: (312) 751-5353
Fax: (312) 751-7884

About the Author

Dave Pipitone is an active Roman Catholic who is husband to Cheryl, father to Emily, parishioner at Holy Family Parish in Inverness, IL. He has participated in and led small-faith sharing groups, authored faith-sharing materials for the Archdiocese of Chicago, wrote the reflection questions for *Spreading the Holy Fire: A Plan for Catholics Evangelizing in the Archdiocese of Chicago* and has contributed to *Disciples in Prayer* (Oregon Catholic Press.) Dave serves as an ad hoc member of the Advisory Committee for the Office for Evangelization of the Archdiocese. He is a 2003 graduate of the Chicago Catholic Scripture School offered through the Office of Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

THE PERSONAL MANDATE:

Becoming a Disciple

PERSONAL OBJECTIVE ONE: COMMITMENT

Each Catholic will recommit her/himself to Jesus Christ as a disciple by embracing evangelization as their personal mission.

Strategies

- Accept God's invitation to personal conversion, to know and love Jesus as Lord and Savior.
- Pray daily for the grace and power of the Holy Spirit to be more of a disciple of Jesus Christ by growing in faith, hope, and love.
- Pray daily for the spread of the Gospel and for all of the disciples of Jesus, especially the Church's official ministers and our Cardinal Archbishop.
- Develop a mindset of "being sent" to share the Good News with everyone.
- Write a personal mission statement in light of evangelization and discipleship.
- Renew your Baptismal Promises on a regular basis (daily if possible) as a sign of your commitment to discipleship and evangelization.
- Take a personal inventory on a regular basis (daily) by examining your conscience, your intentions, and your actions.
- Create a daily plan to evangelize by being "intentional" in what you say and do.
- Witness to the Gospel and to Jesus Christ by living as a faithful, practicing Catholic.
- Support the Church by exercising Gospel stewardship of personal time, talent, and treasure.

Visible Signs

- Individual Catholics have a sense of personal mission and of "being sent."
- Individual Catholics are volunteering for church programs, ministries, and outreach.
- The witness of individual Catholics is noticed at home, in the parish, and in the neighborhood.

PERSONAL OBJECTIVE TWO: BELIEVE

Each Catholic will respond to God's grace to grow in personal holiness by deepening his/her personal relationship with Jesus and His Church.

Strategies

- Actively participate in the Sunday Eucharist on a regular basis.
- Try to share in the Eucharist more often than Sunday.
- Cultivate a daily practice of personal prayer and conversation with God.
- Actively celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a part of your spiritual life.
- Encourage family members to participate in celebrating the Sacramental Life of the Church, especially the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation.
- Develop a deeper appreciation for the Sacred Scriptures by reading and reflecting upon them on a regular basis, especially the readings of the liturgical day.

- Participate in faith-sharing prayer and other spiritual formation events like retreats, parish missions, days of reflection, and the like.
- Join in a small faith-sharing group or small Christian community to share prayer, faith, and Scripture.
- Study and reflect upon the rich heritage and teachings of the Catholic Church as expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* or other such documents and share them with others.
- Develop a daily, personal spiritual regimen; e.g., morning and evening prayers, prayer before meals, examination of conscience, Scripture reading, personal devotions, Mass, etc.

Visible Signs

- Catholics actively and regularly participate in the celebration of the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Holy Eucharist.
- Individual Catholics are enthusiastic about being Catholic.
- Individual Catholics are alive with an informed faith, a vibrant hope for the coming of God's Reign, and a joyful love of God. God's presence is experienced and witnessed.

PERSONAL OBJECTIVE THREE: SHARE

Each Catholic will reach out to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with everyone and especially newcomers, inactive Catholics, the marginalized, and the unchurched.

Strategies

- Become a sharing person who freely witnesses to the Catholic Faith and recount personal experiences openly with others.
- Invite a new parishioner, neighbor, or friend to dinner or a social event to build a friendship based on Christ's love.
- Visit a new parishioner or neighbor in his or her home to build community and communion.
- Become a minister of care and bring Holy Communion to the homebound and hospitalized.
- Practice hospitality in the parish, in the neighborhood, in the workplace by listening, encouraging, affirming, and celebrating others.
- Develop a welcoming atmosphere at home by being present for family meals and other family celebrations and special occasions.
- Celebrate the diversity and faith of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds by sharing stories and entering into conversation and dialogue. (Resources: The pastoral letter of Francis Cardinal George *Dwell in My Love* (April 2001) and the U.S. Catholic Bishops' statement entitled *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*)

- Reach out and welcome Catholics who have become inactive in the practice of their faith by listening to their stories and inviting them, when ready, to return to active participation in the Church. (Resource: *A Time to Listen...A Time to Heal: A Resource Directory for Reaching Out to Inactive Catholics*, U.S. Catholic Bishops Handbook, November 1998)
- Know the outreach ministries of the parish and invite fellow parishioners, friends and family members to enroll in outreach sessions.
- Witness the Gospel to the unchurched and to those who have never heard of Christ and His Church by word and deed so that they may come to know of God's love for them.

Visible Signs

- Inactive Catholics are being invited to return to the practice of their faith.
- Individual Catholics express a joyful spirit of hospitality.
- Individual Catholics live out the paradigm shift of the Second Vatican Council by being focused on outreach to all and not just to practicing Catholics.



PERSONAL OBJECTIVE FOUR: TRANSFORM

Each Catholic will participate in the transformation of society and culture by living and proclaiming the Gospel of Life.

Strategies

- Develop a deeper gratitude and practice of sacrificial love in families to mirror the love of Christ and strengthen the domestic church. (Resource: *Follow the Way of Love: A Pastoral Message of the U.S. Catholic Bishops to Families*)
- Seek out opportunities to witness to Christ through social programs and church-sponsored outreach ministries. (Resources: *Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice* and *In All Things Charity: A Pastoral Challenge for the New Millennium*, U.S. Catholic Bishops)
- Exercise political rights in accord with Gospel and Catholic values by voting, campaigning, and becoming involved in the political process to shape a political environment based on Gospel values of respect for the dignity of the human person. (Resources: *Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to America's Catholics and Faithful Citizenship* by the U.S. Catholic Bishops)
- Discern and practice the wise use of those contemporary media which affirm human life and Gospel values, including reading materials and viewing programs that are in accord with Catholic values and beliefs. (Resources: *Family Guide for Using the Media, Your Family and Cyberspace*, *Civility in Media*, *Renewing the Mind of the Media*, *Family Guide for Using the Media*, U.S. Catholic Bishops)
- Develop an appreciation of the arts and their messages in order to hear the signs of the times and discern the Holy Spirit's voice calling for transformation.
- Develop and practice a spirituality of work so that all employers and employees are transformed by just labor relationships.
- Practice faith by witnessing to the Gospel in all areas of your daily life including family, neighborhood, workplace, politics, the arts, the sciences, media, and other areas.
- Work in your neighborhood, parish, and home to foster cultural diversity and racial justice.
- Be involved in parish and local service groups in your neighborhood which serve the needs of the neighborhood.
- Study and reflect upon the social teachings of the Church.

Visible Signs

- Individual Catholics are involved in putting into practice the social teachings of the Church.
- Persons are transformed in their personal lives as they are affected by the power of the Gospel.
- People everywhere recognize the transforming presence of Jesus in the workplace, neighborhood, parish, and home in the quality of human relationships.

1. *Of what importance is the Personal Mandate?*

To whom does it apply?

2. *Where and how do individuals achieve the strategies to commit, believe, share, and transform society? What resources do they need?*

3. *What visible signs appeal the most to you? Why?*

REFLECTION QUESTIONS