

**Scroll to bottom for most current meeting notes*



Missionary Discipleship at Holy Cross Parish



We will adopt the St. Paul Evangelization Institute program of 1) evangelizing in the public square and 2) seeker small groups (as adapted to the vision and needs of our parish). Eight parishioners attended the evangelization training at Pius X, with several more parishioners interested in spearheading this evangelization focused on our neighborhood and local community as well as renewal of the parish through the seeker small groups. (March 13, 2024)

Implementation at Holy Cross Parish (June 4, 2023)

- Writing your own testimony was a helpful exercise, and hearing others' testimonies.
- Use of one-on-one meetings, touch base with parishioners, get to know one another, leading to faith sharing.
- One-on-ones with family members, especially non-involved in the Church, how to influence children... to come back to the Church.
- Evangelization needs to take place within our parish, to share faith with each other. Start at home, invite fellow parishioners to share.
- Evangelization is not meant to win arguments but to begin a conversation with others, offer opportunities to pray together. What do we invite them to?
- How to overcome here at Holy Cross the fear of one-on-ones. Evangelization in the neighborhood should be in teams of three.
- Four stages of evangelization: Listen, Befriend, Proclaim and Invite
- Have sacramentals to give to people as an evangelizing moment
- Have a booth at various functions- NNN Arts Café, the corner of our church property...
- This is a long-term process, leading to long-term goals with the aim of changing, developing, improving the culture of our parish

April 24, 2024, Meeting

Two-phase focus:

1. Eucharistic small groups (2023-2024)
2. Missionary Discipleship (2024-2025)

Brian – chair the Missionary Discipleship Team

Fall brainstorming (focus on holiness?)

- Small faith sharing groups
- Family prayer nights
- Outreach to inactive parishioners
- Outreach to inactive family members

- One-on-one with another parishioner, or a close friend
- Over 50 Group at a fall meeting- one or more one-on-one discussions; first couple of times one or two people give witness talk/faith sharing?
- At some Masses- leave pew to introduce yourself to a stranger
- Name tags in pews at 10:30 am Mass and/or bring home to prepare to next Sunday
- Discipleship Groups- gathering in gym, get to know one another w/ a few questions; or once a month with opportunity to continue; regular faith sharing groups

May 31, 2024, Meeting

- Take away from St. Paul training: Catholics need to practice being comfortable in sharing aloud faith and witness
- September parish gathering/sharing. Presenter/convenor through St. Paul Evangelization Institute? Parish event with children/childcare that will attract parents to this parish event. Snacks, name tags, sit where you want w/ ice breakers reaching out to others in the room
Ideas: include 1) share about your experience of the parish, which can lead into faith sharing; 2) gauge interest in continuing monthly faith sharing; 3) how to reach out to inactive parishioners for anyone interested in doing this; 4) how to reach out to inactive family members for those interested in doing this; 5) introduce the *Question of the Month*, i.e. communal/family faith sharing
Other ideas: gathering to ask questions you have about the Church, religion, Catholicism, clear up misperceptions...
- Neighborhood Outreach in Spring- might refresh past initiatives including the Kingdom Life connection and the Jesus Gallery
- Faith through the Arts- continue to display school and parish children's Eucharistic/religious artwork in the church (other locations- Brother Andre Room, parish center conference room...)

June 28, 2024, Meeting

- September gathering- best time is probably right after the 10:30 am Mass. Have sandwiches... and childcare. Best dates: September 15 in conjunction with our patronal feast day and the monthly bilingual Mass; September 22; September 8; October 6.
- Needs to include an element of prayer, perhaps an "introduction" to "spontaneous" or unscripted prayer
- Jim will contact the St. Paul Evangelization Institute asap about a presenter/moderator (an email was sent on July 9th)
- Perhaps use the Question of the Month to invite all family members (including/especially inactive members) to participate in a monthly discussion October-December. And other strategies from the presenter. Also, strategies for outreach to inactive parish members; possibly using the Question of the Month? And/or an invitation to a Q&A with the parish pastoral team- how to identify who to invite. Something different in October, November and December to invite them (and other interested parishioners) to?
- Possibility of one-on-one conversation/listening session for (only) 15 minutes. Perhaps these questions: 1) Why are you a member of this parish family? 2) How do you find yourself living your faith in your ordinary, daily life? 3) How can the parish better respond to your needs, the

needs of your family or the needs of the parish community? Could be done after Mass in the Brother Andre Room, the family (cry) room, in a pew, outside in the church courtyard... Also, reach out to inactive parishioners you know. Better someone gets multiple requests than none at all. (It will let them know they're being thought of by the parish.)

- An idea from the St. Paul training: have people develop their own personal testimony (something brief, concise) and "try it out" with others at the gathering

Also discussed: table at the NNN Arts Café. Marge will coordinate. Some *possible* ideas for the table: rosaries, holy water, holy medals, parish bulletins, pamphlet with parish groups, program and activities, school information, information on the Holy Cross Neighborhood Mutual Aid Program, Catholic Bibles for sale

August 23, 2024, Meeting

Current team members: Brian Dolezal, Jim Fenstermaker, C.S.C, Marge Gloster, Jerry Gloster, Noah Junge, C.S.C., Carl Littrell, Jane Murphy, Marty Murphy, Delilah Pittsley, Terri Scott, Mark Sharkey, Lenny Starczewski

- Reviewed those action from the June meeting that have been accomplished:
 - The parish retreat is scheduled for October 6. Adam Jenke from St. Paul School of Evangelization will offer the retreat. It will begin with a prayer service, followed by a presentation on missionary discipleship, and end with strategies for how to reach out to inactive, fallen away... family members and parishioners. Retreat itself is 12:30-2:30 pm.
 - Childcare will be provided by members of our Walking with Moms ministry, for ages infant to ten years of age. People will be asked for register for childcare, but not for the retreat itself.
 - Lunch will precede the retreat immediately after the 1:30 am Mass. We'll plan to provide lunch for 175-200 people. Brian will recruit other parish members of the Knights of Columbus to assist Steve Sommers who will prepare the lunch, and to provide beverages. (Two serving stations like the Back-to-School fiesta?) Menu was decided at the meeting. We'll put out baskets for donations. Jim will coordinate serving tables and round tables and chairs (Ron) and supplies for lunch (Karen).
 - Jim will coordinate registration tables (registration forms, pens, name tags, magic markers). A couple of team members could also register parishioners and do name tags using clipboards. Jim will coordinate screen, projector, sound system.
 - Make retreat materials available to those not able to attend the retreat (submitted after the meeting).
 - Reaching out to fallen-away/inactive parishioners and family members could include emails, texts, phone calls, letters, cards...
- Discussed follow-up activities between the retreat and the spring retreat on March 23rd
 - Late October (*moved to November*): invite people (especially inactive/fallen-away) to an "Open Church" where they can visit the church. (Jim's addendum: Members of the missionary discipleship team, including Noah and Jim, should be present to welcome

- people, give them a tour of the church, and answer questions they may have. Perhaps find a booklet that explains what is found inside a Catholic Church.)
- November (*moved to January*): invite people, both inactive/fallen-away and all interested, to a “Q&A” with the pastoral team (Noah, Meg, Heidi & Jim). Have a box into which people not comfortable asking a question verbally can place their questions.
 - Jim will work with the pastoral team to schedule the October and November activities.
 - December: *investigate an Advent program*
 - We might wish to use (adapt to our parish reality) the Walk with One program that the Church in the United States seems to have adopted for the missionary phase of the Eucharistic Revival, presumably as an outreach to inactive parishioners and family members.
 - We discussed use of the Question of the Month, which Jim needs to implement, as a means of inviting family members to share faith in their homes and perhaps with extended family members.
 - A suggested session could focus on the issues, “What’s holding you back?” for those with doubts, concerns... about the Catholic Church, Christianity, organized religion, etc. Another idea was “block parties” that could be sponsored by parishioners on the blocks where they live to bring all the neighbors together to get to know each other.
 - Not discussed due to time restraints: one-on-one conversations/listening sessions; people develop their own personal testimonies (see June 28 notes)
- Looking ahead to the spring retreat
 - What strategies might be employed to reach out to the neighborhood and local community? It may not be feasible to knock on doors of unknown neighbors, but this could be done with known inactive parishioners within and outside our parish boundaries. We can find alternatives to cover homes within our parish boundaries, such as leaflet the area. (Addendum: There are services that will send postcards... to all homes in given zip codes, if that is something which is affordable.)
 - NNN Arts Café
 - Marge discussed the table that the parish will have at the NNN Arts Café on Sunday, September 29, 12:00-6:00 pm. There will be a variety of items for people to take.

September 27, 2024, Meeting

- Most of the meeting was devoted to the parish retreat on October 6th
- The Open Church program will be moved to November. Father Jim will investigate the cost of sending a postcard to all residences in the area surrounding the parish, e.g. 46628 zip code (and others?)
- The Q&A will be moved to January
- Father Jim will investigate a possible program for Advent
- Get ideas from other parishes

October 18, 2024, Meeting

- Review of the parish retreat
 - The lunch was a nice time of fellowship (Parish Pastoral Council said it was energizing)
 - Many parishioners commented that the second part of the retreat was more meaningful and practical, including the table discussions (also mentioned by Parish Pastoral Council—more time would have been helpful) and the focus on next steps (Parish Pastoral Council mentioned the 10 steps being especially helpful in how to implement the outreach)
 - Parish Pastoral Council commented on how the presentation helped to reframe evangelization by focusing on presence, kindness and building relationships
 - There was a good number of young people present, which was encouraging
 - A screen might have made the slides easier to read, or larger print
- Ideas for follow up to the retreat
 - Father Jim plans on including a summary of the “Marks” and “Ten Ways” in an upcoming bulletin along with a couple of pastor’s columns on the retreat and the invitation for all parishioners to participate in missionary outreach this fall
 - Have a commissioning and sending of all parishioners at end of Masses on weekend when the Action Plan is included in the bulletin
 - Have a follow up meeting for parishioners to share their experiences and challenges in reaching out as missionary disciples to family members and parishioners
- Review of parish outreach at the NNN Arts Café
 - Good conversations with people who stopped at our table or who were approached by our parishioners as they walked by the table and were offered a rosary (while they lasted)
 - People reacted positively to our parish having a table
 - A number of people took books in English and Spanish from our table
- Open Church
 - The “Open Church” has been pushed back to coincide with the second retreat’s emphasis on outreach to the neighborhood and local community. **The retreat has been rescheduled for March 9th.** We will have the Open Church on Sunday, March 23rd.
- Q&A with the pastoral team
 - The “Q&A” has been moved up to Sunday, December 8th, at 2 pm (thereby also serving as an Advent event). We will begin with a light social in the Brother Andre Room and then hold the Q&A in the church or Brother Andre Room depending on the turnout.
 - The first part of the event will invite participants to ask questions of a panel consisting of the parish pastoral team members (pastor, deacon, director of children’s catechesis, and director of music ministry), and perhaps a parishioner with a doctorate in theology(?). The second part of the program will give participants the opportunity to have informal, one-on-one discussions with the panel members.
 - We will have members of the missionary discipleship team make presentations at Masses a few weeks before, inviting them to attend and to invite an inactive family member or parishioner to attend with them. (All parishioners will be invited to attend regardless of whether they bring someone with them.)

- We'll place this in the school newsletter as well as the parish bulletin and e-newsletter for a few weeks before the event.

November 22, 2024, Meeting

Updates from last meeting's agenda

- Jim included a summary of the Marks and Ten Ways from the parish retreat in a pastor's column
- All parishioners received a copy of the Action Plan and were blessed and commissioned at the November 17th Mass.
- Follow up meeting for parishioners- see below

Exploring Our Faith & the Church – December 8th Q&A with pastoral team members

- Members of the missionary discipleship team will give a brief announcement concerning the Q&A at the Masses on December 7-8. Delilah at 4:00 pm, Marty at 8:30 am and Terri at 10:30 am. Jim and Noah will develop a narrative from the ideas generated at the meeting.
- Terri and Marty will provide light snacks in the Brother Andre Room for 20 minutes or so before the program begins.
- We will have index cards available for those who may wish to use them instead of asking questions out loud.
- Jim will MC the Q&A so that questions are directed to the appropriate panel members who all have opportunities to respond

Parishioner gathering on February 2nd after the 10:30 am Mass

- The Challenges of Sharing Our Faith with Others (a working title)
- In response to suggestion at previous meeting: Have a follow up meeting for parishioners to share their experiences and challenges in reaching out as missionary disciples to family members and parishioners
- We will expand the focus of the meeting to include a general discussion of the challenges of sharing one's faith with family members and others
- Brian volunteered the Community Building Team to provide snacks for this event
- Have someone at each Mass invite parishioners to this gathering, preferably someone who could give a *brief* personal testimony related to the topic. Team members will think of parishioners, including themselves, who might be interested in giving this presentation. Send your suggestions to Jim before our next meeting.

January 10, 2025, Meeting

Challenges of Sharing Our Faith gathering, February 2nd

Parish Retreat on March 9th (First Sunday of Lent)

Open Church on March 23rd

- Develop a name for the event, such as "Come Discover Who We Are" or something similar
- Allow visitors to *experience* the church as a place of prayer

- Have a table for people to sign up if they wish to learn more about the parish or receive further information on the parish, the school, the parish e-newsletter...
- Invite all members of the missionary discipleship team to serve as guides
- Possible things a guide could point out and explain: candles, statues/saints, holy water, stations of the cross, sanctuary/altar/ambo/sanctuary candle, stained glass windows, baptism font & paschal candle, choir area, kneelers, confessional, incense... Jim and Noah can work on this list with brief explanations

Lenten Spirituality Program

- Discussed idea of having parishioners give presentations on the various Tuesday evenings of Lent.