

Practical Ways of Showing Your Catholic Faith

Actions

A powerful way to spread the good news is to demonstrate it in daily life. Actions speak louder than words. If faith really affects how one speaks and acts in private and in public, people will take notice. A faith lived is a powerful, attractive faith.

Help Someone in Need

It is important to see Jesus in the poor. When faith is put into action by serving those in need, faith comes alive and has the power to attract others. Evangelizers don't just write checks but reach out to the sick, the homebound, the troubled, the homeless, the hungry, and the imprisoned. When others see this "hands on" service to the poor, they will take the faith more seriously.

Pray

Prayer is what drives evangelization. Prayer is something we can all do – any time, any place. We can pray for ourselves and for others. And certainly, almost everyone, even the most hardened unbeliever, appreciates prayers in time of need.

Respect Other People

Common courtesy seems to be on the wane today. Jesus invites us to be courteous, to have a deep respect for the God-given dignity of each human being. Not everyone is asked to write a treatise about human dignity, but we are all called to show respect and concern for each person - those we like and those we don't like. There are those who imagine they are better than others, and there are those who show disrespect for race, sex, or economic status. When the disciples of Jesus show respect for others, we have a better chance of opening our minds and hearts to the Gospel of Jesus. We are, as children of God, brothers and sisters.

Begin at Home

Someone once said: "Charity begins at home." So does evangelization. Husbands and wives should help each other to take their faith seriously and grow in it. Parents are the first to help their children open their minds and hearts to Jesus by teaching them how to pray and giving them their first religion lessons. How important for the family to practice their faith, especially by participating in the Sunday Eucharist.

Start With Your Friends

One may find it uncomfortable to evangelize beyond the family. No one wants to be thought of as a "religious fanatic." However, we all have friends who are "unchurched" or "barely churched." When those who have returned to the practice of their faith are asked why they were away from the church, some for rather extensive periods of time, they often respond "No one asked me to come back. No one missed me."

Share Your Faith Story

We all believe that the Lord has touched our hearts with His Truth and His Love. To evangelize is to be aware of the ways God is active in our lives and to speak personally and appropriately about that. People will think more seriously about their own faith when they hear what faith means in the lives of others.

Include God in Your Everyday Vocabulary

It is not against the law to speak about God. To be conscious of God's presence in everyday life, in decisions great and small, in events and casual happenings, and to casually mention how God works in your life is to evangelize. And that helps others to raise their awareness that God is very much alive and present in our midst.

Bring a Friend to Church

Some of the newly baptized at Easter are quick to recognize the fact that they took the step of requesting Baptism because someone had brought them to church. That seems to be good evangelization. Ask house guests, or a co-worker if he or she would like to attend Mass with you. Invite your friends to come to Sunday Mass or a parish adult formation class.

Be Joyful

Joy is not hilarity. Those who replace the "pursuit of happiness" with the pursuit of pleasure will find lasting joy always eluding them. Joy is an inner assurance that your will is aligned with God's, that you are graced beyond anything you could merit on your own. Joy is abiding contentment.

Suggestions for a Catholic Approach to Sharing Faith with Family and Friends

- Say "I will pray for you" to a friend who has shared some personal concern or difficulty.
- Respond "Thank God" when someone shares a success story with you.
- Make the sign of the cross, as you pray before a meal in a restaurant.
- Display a religious article in your room.
- Invite someone who has been away from the Church for a while, to attend Mass with you.
- Offer to help your neighbor who needs assistance.
- Take time in your life for those who are suffering or in need. Remember, people are more important than tasks.
- When you see God working in your life, point it out to others. We are all enriched by the personal witness of others.
- Talk to friends about the good experiences you have had with the Church.
- Invite friends to social functions of your parish.
- Give money or food to a person in need. Remember that when you reach out to the poor, you are reaching out like Christ Himself did.
- Witness your faith with your own family and friends by gently stating, "I believe".
- Warmly greet others at mass who you do not know. Sometimes members of our community fall away from the Church because they feel alienated from others in the congregation.

- Tactfully change the direction of the conversation at home or school when things take an uncharitable or gossipy turn.
- Send a sympathy or get-well card to neighbors or friends assuring them of your prayers.
- Continue to comfort a grieving friend or neighbor well after the funeral. The process of dealing with a loss takes a long time. Offer to accompany the person who is grieving to social activities or make yourself available just to talk.
- Volunteer your time for visiting shut-ins, the elderly, prisoners, etc. Share your favorite story in the Bible with them during your visit.
- Be generous with compliments, especially to those who appear to be down today
- Share a smile and a personal greeting with a stranger. Try to see Christ in everyone you encounter each day.
- Share an unanswered prayer with a friend or family member. Remember to give thanks for what you have received.
- Tell someone about a good book or tape to help him or her grow in his or her faith.
- Wear a cross on a chain or other religious articles. You might be surprised how many times this will start a conversation about your faith.
- Be an example to family and friends as to how a disciple of Jesus acts and speaks.
- Forgive someone who has wronged you. Ask for forgiveness from someone you have wronged.
- Ask friends and family members to pray for your special intentions.
- Move to the center of the church pew, theater seat, etc., which invites others to join you and provides an opportunity for conversation.
- Do not judge others. Do not speak unkindly of others. Always look for the good in others and point this out when they are being hostile.
- Serve your parish as a Eucharistic minister, lector, choir member, altar server, usher, etc.
- Devote a specific amount of time to your daily prayer life. It is impossible to maintain a relationship with anyone without communication. Prayer should be viewed as a dialogue with God, not a monologue. Make sure you allow time for quiet reflection and listen with your heart to what the Lord tells you.
- Allow your faith to carry over into your work by insisting on fair prices, good products, and fair treatment for customers and employees alike.
- Share your personal faith story of how God has worked in your life with a friend or a family member.
- Work in a soup kitchen, food program, a shelter for the homeless or some other charitable agency. Try to see Christ in everyone you encounter there.
- Treat everyone you meet with dignity. No matter what they look like, how they try your patience, or how they speak, they are part of the Body of Christ.

WHAT ARE SOME “QUALITIES OF CATHOLIC EVANGELIZATION?”

Catholic Evangelization is rooted in life – family (integral, divorced, single parent, nuclear), world (friends, workplace, technology, culture, neighbors, business offices, civic associations), and the church.

Catholic Evangelization is directed toward the kingdom of God (sharing faith is a way of furthering God’s kingdom).

Catholic Evangelization is always related in some ways to the Christian community (never just “me and Jesus”).

Catholic Evangelization recognizes all church members as partners in furthering God’s kingdom (collaboration).

Catholic Evangelization energizes Christian activities and church ministries (it’s not just another program).

Catholic Evangelization interprets Sacred Scripture in a rich way and does not limit the Bible to its literal meaning (it’s not fundamentalist).

Catholic Evangelization is optimistic, but realistic (the world is basically good but wounded).

Catholic Evangelization is a lifelong journey to God (it’s a continuous process of conversion).

Catholic Evangelization happens in the midst of everyday living (God in ordinary life).

Catholic Evangelization offers a firm anchor and clear direction in an uncertain world (provides a wonderful Faith Tradition).