

St. Louis Church

Inviting the Flock Home

Meeting Them Where They Are At

“But evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man's concrete life, both personal and social. This is why evangelization involves an explicit message, adapted to the different situations constantly being realized, about the rights and duties of every human being, about family life without which personal growth and development is hardly possible, about life in society, about international life, peace, justice and development- a message especially energetic today about liberation” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 29, cf. 63).

“In fact there are innumerable events in life and human situations which offer the opportunity for a discreet but incisive statement of what the Lord has to say in this or that particular circumstance” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 43).

“Yet, one can never sufficiently stress the fact that evangelization does not consist only of the preaching and teaching of a doctrine. ***For evangelization must touch life***” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 47, emphasis added).

Understanding Where They Are At:

- 1) Physically
- 2) Emotionally
- 3) Psychologically
- 4) Spiritually
 - a) Are they seeking something? Do they know it is faith they are seeking?
 - b) What are they seeking in a faith that would be ***relevant*** to them?
- 5) Theologically
 - a) What misconceptions do they have about our Catholic faith?
 - b) For lapsed or not connected Catholics, how much were they ever taught? Do they need or want:
 - i) Pre-evangelization
 - ii) Re-evangelization
 - iii) General teaching
 - c) Why did they leave? (We could ask these same question of target audiences #1, 2, and 3.)
 - i) Have they been ***personally*** hurt by the Church?
 - ii) Has someone close to them been hurt by the Church?
 - iii) Do they trust the Church or even institutions in general? (We are inviting them to faith, not just a building or institution)

- iv) They felt like they did not get much out of Mass.
 - v) They felt like our faith did not seem relevant to them.
- 6) “It is often said nowadays that the present century thirsts for authenticity...Do you really believe what you are proclaiming? Do you live what you believe? Do you really preach what you live?” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 76).
 - a) John 7:46b – *“Never before has anyone spoken like this.”*
 - b) Matthew 7:28-29 – *“When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught as one having authority, and not as their scribes.”*
 - 7) “The first is respect for the religious and spiritual situation of those being evangelized. Respect for their tempo and pace; no one has the right to force them excessively. Respect for their conscience and convictions, which are not to be treated in a harsh manner. Another sign of this love is concern not to wound the other person, especially if he or she is weak in faith, with statements that may be clear for those who are already initiated but which for the faithful can be a source of bewilderment and scandal, like a wound in the soul” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 79)
 - 8) “It would certainly be an error to impose something on the consciences of our brethren” (EN, 80).
 - 9) “We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur” (Pope Francis, EG, 171).
 - 10) From Men’s Spirituality Group 7/27/26 –from Peter Kreeft – Some people are not Christian because they think this (Isaiah 55:1-3) sounds too good to be true.