



Sharing the Faith You Love

Fellowship Presentation and Reflections

I created this presentation because I am aware that for many Catholics, the topic of evangelization stirs up fears and many different emotions. These notes are the fruit of my prayer for my fellowship about evangelization. I wanted to introduce the topic in a way that would clarify why we are called to evangelize, give examples of what it “looks like” for an everyday Catholic, and to encourage the women. I have included notes I thought would be most helpful in sharing this presentation with other facilitators, at the request of Barbara Cheddar, Ministry President.

Songs for presentation, meditation:

“The Summons,” by Kevin Grove, (also, *“Here I Am Lord,”* by Dan Schutte, or *“Servant Song,”* by Donna Marie McCargill, OSM; all published in *“Breaking Bread”* music book by OCP(.org)

Prayers for presentation / meditation

Opening Prayer: “Come, Holy Spirit”

“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth you Spirit, and they shall be created; and You will renew the face of the earth. O God, you taught the hearts of your faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of that same Spirit, we may be truly wise and always rejoice in His consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

—*Traditional Catholic Prayer*

PRESENTATION NOTES

*Feel free to adapt these notes or change the order,
to fit your fellowship’s needs and your presentation style.*

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- Our new topic, *“Sharing the Faith you Love,”* may come to you as a surprise. How gracious is our God who surprises with new ways to grow in love for Him! We who have been blessed, healed, and gifted by God—now have the honor of showing our gratitude in beautiful, tangible ways.
 - In our new study, we are shifting from studying the Old Testament, the angels, and women in scripture — to the New Testament and our call to share the Good News of Gospel — the Mercy of God. Pope Francis has been exhorting the whole Church to embrace this call since the beginning of his papacy. Mercy and Mission permeate all his homilies, papal visits around the world, and his encyclicals.
 - **It is an invitation, a summons** from Christ through Pope Francis and the Church, to engage more fully in the life and mission of the Faith we profess. We do this right in our neighborhood, where we frequently engage with people in such diverse activities as our place of work or volunteering, grocery shopping, the dentist office, a restaurant, a public library or park — any place we encounter people with whom we can share God’s mercy.
 - **The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy:** Christ is pouring out his gifts on his people abundantly, so that they may be His face to the world, his hands that heal and comfort, and his heart of compassion in a hurting world.
 - **We share in the *common priesthood of Christ*** (vs. ordained priesthood) in building up the Church, when we exercise the grace of Baptism in “a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life

according to the Spirit.” (CCC: 1546–1547). “The whole church is a priestly people. Through Baptism all the faithful share in the priesthood of Jesus.” (CCC: 1591. See also CCC: 871–873)

- **In evangelizing, we live the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.**
 - **Corporal** (performed in volunteer work or ministry): Feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead.
 - **Spiritual:** *specifically* – Counsel the Doubtful, Instruct the Ignorant, Comfort the Afflicted, Pray for the Living, (also, admonish the sinner, forgive offenses willingly, bear wrongs patiently, and pray for the dead).
- **The Creed:** At every Mass, we recite the Creed, proclaiming the four attributes of the Church: “*I believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic church.*” This means our Faith is founded on the missionary work of the Apostles, and this work continues until the end of time. (CCC: 811–865). Thus, we are responsible for continuing the apostolic work – the mission of the church.
- **The Holy Spirit is the divine agent working through us,** when we step out in faith and ‘share the faith we love’ with others. *We don’t share our faith solely on our own power.* We must be women of faithful prayer to the Holy Spirit, asking for the gifts we need, and to Jesus Christ for the fortitude and strength to fulfill His will.
- **We are never alone!** We have access to the *power of Christ* who promised He “*would be with us always,*” whenever we receive Him in the Holy Eucharist at Mass. The hosts of angels and the saints pray for us in the *Communion of the Angels and Saints in heaven and on earth.* We are uplifted through the continuous prayers of the Church, and by the *intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary,* who prays for all the faithful who continue Christ’s mission.
- **People are thirsting for the mercy of God!** We women are naturally endowed with the gift of nurturing, comforting, and lifting up others — the innate ability to show mercy. Our new study will equip us to pray for others, to be God’s touch of tenderness to those in pain or fatigued, to spread the light of Christ wherever we happen to be during our day, and to explain our Faith to others when the opportunity or need arises.
- **It is giving a gift; it is not proselytizing,** says Pope Francis.* (I read several quotes from Pope Francis’ Homily, “Mercy and Mission go hand in hand,” Pope says.” Link at end of this document)
- **God uses us just as we are!** *Some examples from my parish:*
 - **Planting seeds and watering them:** “Mandy” and her husband began telling their neighbor “Ted” that they were praying for him. They continued to pray and tell “Ted” for many years, watering the ‘seeds’. One day those seeds bore fruit when “Ted” asked to talk with them about their faith, and eventually he became a Christian.
 - **Sharing Christ’s mercy and love:** One day I was in a department store, and thanked the sales associate with a handshake for her cheerful service and said, “God bless you.” Carrie was utterly surprised and said, “Thank you! No one ever says anything as kind as that to me.” I asked if I could pray for her, and “Carrie” said, “Yes.” After praying for her, we both embraced in a warm hug. So often when I pray with someone “in the neighborhood” tears well up in their eyes, or they are surprised by the gift I have offered them. *Hurting people are everywhere!*
 - **Witnesses of faith at a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic:** “Irene” faithfully prays the rosary with a group on the sidewalk outside the clinic every week, and the lives of many babies are saved through this *public witness and the power of prayer!*

- **Bringing healing to wounded people:** Once when I was praying for a client at St. Francis House, who had interviewed for rent assistance in the Homeless Prevention program, a woman in the next room overheard the prayer. When it was time for her interview, the first words she spoke were, *“Would you pray for me, too?”* As I prayed, “Jenny” began to weep. I hugged her, and continued to hold her and pray until she was calm. *What a sacred moment!*

Closing Prayer: “Anima Christi”

“Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me. Within your wounds, shelter me. Never permit me separated from you. From the evil one, protect me. In the hour of my death call me, and bid me come to you; that with your saints I may praise You forever and ever. Amen.” — *St. Ignatius of Loyola*

Encouragement: When we begin our study of ‘sharing the faith we love,’ we will learn little by little how to do it, and we will grow “from strength to strength” (Psalm 84:7). It is a learning process that requires patience, practice, faithfulness to prayer, and mutual support. We will surely have the support of one another in our fellowship!

God is faithful. He will *always* give us what we need and ask for in prayer, when it is according to His will.

The study books: The basic book, "Sharing the Faith You Love," is a "how to" book with examples and exercises to help us develop the skills of evangelization. The second book, "Evangelizing Catholics," explains the mission of the Church and why we evangelize. Both books are written by lay Catholics. The Boucher's are veteran evangelists. Author Scott Hahn is a highly respected Catholic theologian and a life-long evangelist.

For Facilitators: I believe that by sharing stories from your own parish and neighborhood, you will help women to realize and say, *“I can do this, too!”* ... as it did in my Fellowship at All Saints Parish. *God bless you all!*

RESOURCES

Pope Francis’ special general audience homilies for the Jubilee year of Mercy:

1. ***“Mercy and mission go hand-in-hand, Pope says”** (*I read several parts of this article to my fellowship in my presentation*) <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/mercy-and-mission-go-hand-in-hand-pope-says-86945/>
2. **“Make a daily commitment to spreading God’s mercy, Pope Francis says”**
<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/make-a-daily-commitment-to-spreading-gods-mercy-pope-francis-says-30424/>

Books:

“A Year of Mercy with Pope Francis, Daily Reflections” – *contains many short reflections on mission / mercy*
“The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy” (one of a series for the Jubilee Year of Mercy)
- both published by Our Sunday Visitor.

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