

BUILDING EVANGELISM

COMPREHENSIVE SHARING JESUS AUDIT

Assumption – Read You Are Witnesses of These Things, by Craig and Chelsey Satterlee or other resources about sharing the story of Jesus and giving testimonies. After that is done, not this.

YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES is the place to start. It is the basic “how to” for sharing Jesus. There are other resources that support this sharing giving ideas and guidance to opportunities to share. This book is the place to start. The church council, leadership, or a group of dedicated folks can read the book, follow the discussion questions and practice sharing. Then it is time to expand the circle. Invite others into the book and sharing Jesus. Practice sharing, come back and share your experiences.

As more and more people read the book and begin sharing, a congregation could train Jesus Sharing Coaches/Mentors. These people would keep in contact with the group, support folks and facilitate meetings where the stories are told and people are encouraged to share more.

This is a comprehensive overview of all areas of congregational ministry to access opportunities for evangelism, sharing and listening with the story of Jesus. Each congregation is different so prioritize the topics to fit needs.

If we take seriously that one of the essential ministries we do as the church and personally as followers of Jesus is to share the story of Jesus, then it is important to prioritize it in core values, practice, and budgeting.

We live in what many are calling it the Post-Modern Post Christian Era.

It means we live in a time when the minority of the world’s population, only 25% claim to know the story of Jesus. In the United States in 2000 the country claimed it was 75% Christian, now 63% and soon we will reach a point, if we stay on the path of not sharing Jesus, that less than 50% will know the story of Jesus.

For the last ½ century our evangelism programs have been largely, “If We Build It They Will Come”. The post war baby boom fueled evangelism by building. Now it is a new time, a new era. A time to get back to sharing the story of Jesus. Paul’s words ring true today just as powerfully as they did 2000 years ago.

14 But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? 15 And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” Romans 10:14-15

CORE VALUES, GUIDING PRINCIPALS, MISSION/VISION

What is the Mission Statement of the congregation?

Does it mention sharing the story of Jesus?

How about the Guiding Principles or Core Values?

If it is not in the Mission Statement then it needs to be here.

A statement that speaks loudly that this is a community of Jesus and its mission is to share the Good News of Jesus in all that it does. (Something like that)

Post Mission Statement – Core Values and Guiding Principles where visitors can see

When I worked with with Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio the state changed the changed the laws regarding land owned by nonprofits and churches being tax exempt. All lands that were not a functioning worshiping community were put on to the tax rolls and then the entity had to go to tax court and prove that everything that happened on the property was directly related to the mission of the church. From how we played baseball, to how we served meals, to our services of worship, to the way cared for the land. It was an interesting process to be in a court of law and be able to articulate details about how everything we did at church camp related to the mission and core values of the church. We won the case and received tax exempt statue for the 125 acres of land.

SO – In a similar vein, we look at everything that we do in the church and see if it relates to the core values and guiding principles to share the story of Jesus.

What are ways your congregation can solidify in its guiding documents a commitment to share Jesus?

(And actually do it?)

WORSHIP

Worship with all it many facets is one of the primary activities of the church. People gather regularly to hear The Word and join in the sacraments. That makes worship a strategic point of contact with members of the congregation and new folks who are searching.

1. **Members** – Sunday morning includes worship, fellowship, and time for education. It is a time when members gather and can be a time to model and learn sharing Jesus.

Worship provides a time for inspiration, engaging the story of Jesus, sharing evangelism stories, and encouraging the faithful.

How is worship providing inspiration for the work of evangelism?

What are ways stories of evangelism efforts can be shared in worship?

Is the preaching providing insight and reflection on the stories of Jesus? Is it helping hearers to be able to share the story of Jesus and how it fits together?

Resource: [My Burden is Light](#), Bishop Craig A. Satterlee, Ph.D

2. **Visitors** – As members share the stories of Jesus, not only will others get to know Jesus' saving grace and acceptance, they often have a desire to become part of a community that practices sharing Jesus and is committed to the compassion and welcome that Jesus demonstrates. It is vitally important that the congregation is ready to welcome at Sunday morning worship and events.

- Follow step by step the journey of a new person coming to the church.
 - + View from the road
 - + Is it clear where to park? Enter the building?
 - + Is there a cheerful person to greet? Inside – how

About outside?

- + Is there greeter training so that folks get welcomed but not overwhelmed?
Point out rest rooms, invite to fellowship and someone to sit with them?
- + Special instructions and welcome for families with children.
Where is nursery – we expect children to be busy – coloring books, activity bags, fidget gadgets.
And of course coloring books and kids' books about Jesus.
Arch Books (125 Bible Stories) or
Frolic Bible Series for Kids
- + Does the pastor greet new folks before worship, or is the pastor focused on business and people with last minute requests before worship?
- + What kind of follow up is there for visitors?
Letter, gift, or phone call?
 - Are announcements short and to the point without insider language?
Directions to website for additional information?
 - Are there any stories shared about lives touched by outreach and sharing the story of Jesus?

3. **Music** – Is there a variety of music that would appeal to different generations? Is it easy to sing? Are there varied options, screen, bulletin, hymnbook, and phone? Is there a song leader that helps people sing, learn new songs?
4. **Liturgy** – Does the pastor or worship assistant make announcements about where to find hymns, where we are in the liturgy, etc. Is there occasionally a service where the parts of the liturgy are explained and why we do it this way?
5. **Fellowship** – If there is coffee hour/fellowship, and are there folks trained to sit with visitors and talk with them (mostly listen). Ask them about their lives? Share Jesus with them?
6. **Invitation** – Make available invitations to special services or holidays that members can pass on to friends and family.
“Looking for a traditional place to worship on Christmas Eve? Come join us for Christmas Carols, The Story of Jesus, and Candlelight Silent Night”.
7. **Worship on the Road** – Are there places in your community that on a regular schedule, worship can be held outside? A park, a band stand, and cemetery? Homeless community? Someplace where people might gather and join in? Or a Flash Mob style where people could join in with Christmas Carols, or a Good Friday Cross Walk? Somewhere where worship can move out of the building and engage the community? Maybe do it with others churches. Always making sure that it is about Jesus and especially outsiders and seekers are invited to join in?
8. **Back Doors?** - What are back doors into the community of Jesus for those who are not ready to attend worship? How are people invited through Fellowship, Community, and/or Service Events to meet Jesus and the community of Jesus followers?

Always thinking about how members and visitors are engaging the stories of Jesus as they worship and fellowship.

BUILDING

*Caveat – Don't let working on the building be a hindrance or excuse for **not** sharing stories of Jesus and witnessing.)*

Many people pass by the church building every day. What do they notice?

Is the Mission Statement – core values and guiding principles posted where people can see? Right where people enter and gather it says – one of our guiding principles is to be a community of Jesus and share the story of Jesus at every opportunity.

Is there a sign by the road that welcomes or has phrases about Jesus? Do the grounds look inviting? Everything in good repair?

Play area for kids? Place for quiet meditation?

Are there banners and flags that promote special days or activities? Does it look like the place is alive and growing?

Is it clear which is the entrance?

Active churches have community groups that use the building.

The mission/purpose and/or core values of the church should be posted and obvious.

What do those people see/know about your church by just by walking through the building to a meeting?

Pictures of church activities, outreach programs, stories of Jesus? Are there special kid's areas?

Is there current information about the church and welcome available?

How about self-help materials, free bibles?

What about church member greeters that are present at community activities that take place in the building during the week? Welcoming and facilitating them.

Does the pastor or representative of the church occasionally visit groups that use the building to welcome and connect?

Does someone on a regular basis offer this greeting: "We see your group as an extension of our ministry to share the love and hospitality of Jesus? Thank you for being here".

Catholic Churches all have Stations of the Cross and many have prayer books that go with them. What can we provide in and around the building for prayer, Jesus stories, or quiet meditation?

Is the building clean, bright, in good repair? Are there obstacles to entering? Does the nursery look inviting? Clean and up to date? Close to the worship space?

What do the rest rooms look like? Are they easy to find?

Handicapped accessibility? Handicapped parking? Push button to open main door?

Ramps? Restrooms handicapped assessable?

Is the congregation willing to share the building in case of a disaster?

Contact your local Red Cross and get registered as a shelter site. Contact your Country Emergency Management Director and offer the building and contact number in case of an emergency.

Share other ideas about how the building becomes a tool for sharing the story of Jesus.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. **WEBSITE** - Most often, people who visit the church for an activity or worship or special event like wedding, funeral, etc., look for the church's website. The address and phone number should be clear. The page should be updated frequently. It should have current worship information and pictures of the staff. It should be obvious how to view online worship or recording of worship. Pictures should include people. Pictures of children should be in groups at a distance so it is not easy to recognize individuals. People in worship, people serving, people sharing stories of Jesus. There are ways to buy up the ranking on search engines. It might be something to look into. There can be links to learning more about Jesus, schedules of activities, and a very specific welcome statement. What looks inviting on the webpage?
2. **SOCIAL MEDIA** – Social media is a popular way to advertise. Train your congregation to share posts about events and not just like them. Share invites for special events, activities, and worship services. Make it an active page. Try to avoid insider language like WELCA meets on Tuesday, call Margaret for details. Share memes that invoke curiosity or thought. Bible verses that might intrigue looking up the rest of the story in the bible.
3. **INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS** – Most congregations have ways to share news; newsletters, weekly email, and others. What are ways to include stories of sharing faith? Helpful hints about sharing the stories of Jesus? Personal testimonies?

STEWARDSHIP

- What are the expectations for worship attenders on how to give?
- Is stewardship/giving related to Jesus? Are stories about Jesus and Stewardship used to support giving?
- Are giving options available on the webpage for general gifts and special gifts?
- Are special causes advertised on social media with an ability to give on line?
- Like disaster relief, both local and international? Hunger, local missions?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

1. **How Are You Connected** – take a look at ways the congregation already engages the community. What local outreaches are supported? Who meets in the building? What community activities/events does the congregation participate in? How can sharing Jesus and listening to people's stories be a part of outreach?
2. **Broaden the Connections** – Take advantage of statistical data about the community. (Some synods use Mission Insite) – the DEM.) Learn to do "One on

One Intentional Conversations”. Brainstorm a list of people, leaders and people “in the know” in the community. Recruit people and train people to go and interview them, specifically looking for places to engage people and people and populations that fall through the crack.

Report back and make lists of points of engagement. Then prioritize the list. Use the 90 Day Mission Plan to try new ideas.

3. **Infuse SHARING JESUS into your Outreach** – Look at each of the community engagements and outreach projects the congregation is involved/connected with and look for opportunities to share Jesus. If the project is helping with home repairs, is there someone who can sit with the homeowner and listen to their story and share Jesus and why the church helps? If it is a food pantry/baby pantry/personal needs pantry, can one or more folks be listeners who engage those receiving and listen to them and share stories of Jesus and prayers? If it is a community event or festival, how about a Prayer Station? People come and ask for prayers.

Brainstorm ideas on how every event the church does can be infused with sharing Stories of Jesus and engaging people.

4. **Branding** – whenever people from the church are out doing things in the community, serving in some way, have them dress in clothing with the church name/logo on it. Advertise on people. Let what they wear be a conversation starter. Something catchy. (Example – Give Generously – Thrivent Shirts)

CARING MINISTRIES

How is sharing the story of Jesus done in the midst of caring ministries like Stephen Ministry, Eucharistic Ministers, Hospital Visitors, and Homebound and those in Care Facilities?

1. **Nursing Homes and Care Facilities** – Most care facilities are always looking for folks who will come in and do worship services. They love to hear the Old, Old, Story of Jesus and His Love. Many folks in those facilities are forgotten by their church or what to be connected with a church, but are often neglected.
2. **Eucharistic Ministers and Home Visitors** – A bible story can be shared or with each visit one of the many probing questions can be asked, like: “What is your favorite Bible Story”, “Who do you relate to in the story of Jesus”, “Where have you seen Jesus at work”.

EDUCATION and SPIRITUALLY

1. **Insider Bible Study** – Continued learning and discussing the story of Jesus with the goal of sharing.
2. **Outsider/Seeker Bible Study** – Bible Study focused on those new to the biblical account. Beginners Bible Study
3. **Bible Study on the Road** – Bible Study in places around town where folks gather. A version of Seeker Bible Study
4. **Stories of Jesus for Children** – What are ways we promote teaching stories of Jesus for children, youth, and young adults?
5. **Spirituality** – encourage prayer groups, study the saints, book groups, and? and invite outsiders
6. **Methods** – Walk through books of the bible. Follow themes

What else comes to mind?

7. **Devotions** – use Jesus questions resources from the book or handout to start meetings.

FELLOWSHIP/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

What social activities does the congregation participate in?

How might all those activities be infused with conversations about faith?

Faith Talk Cards, Story of Jesus questions, faith and life questions.

Are there activities just for members?

What kind of activities can be planned where people can bring a friend?

Progressive dinner using questions from the book? (Prince of Peace Portage)

What social events could you connect to sharing Jesus?

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF JESUS

Learning to share Jesus is a little bit like learning a new language.

A friend of mine will not accept the excuse that some people have the “Sharing Jesus Gene” and other people do not. She says it is just an unused muscle that we all have and it needs exercise.

Practice bringing up Jesus in conversations, not in a confrontational way, but questions and discussions.

Bless people and offer to pray for them or with them.

Do church meetings start with conversations about Jesus?

Telling favorite Bible stories or ways to reflect on Bible Stories?

Discussion started questions?

PERSONAL CONVERSATION STARTERS

Are there clues in your home about your faith?

Pictures/sayings?

When guest or other family come, do you say table grace?

Are others invited to pray?

Ways to infuse Jesus into holidays and special events.

Advent Wreath and family devotions?

Saints Days?

Easter rituals and practices?

Infusing Jesus into conversations with friends and family?

IDEAS AND PLACES TO SHARE JESUS

How can the church be present in the community and work on ways to share Jesus?

- Bible Studies, Pub Theology, Beer and Hymns, Pub Choirs, Wild Church,
- Pastors or church members in public places inviting others to pray:
Campus Pastor THE PASTOR IS IN, pastor in coffee shop regular basis –
WHAT CAN WE PRAY FOR?

- Hosting/presiding funerals to people with no church
- Weddings – when people church shop – welcome but explain that the church/pastor only does church weddings with pre-marriage sessions. The service will talk about Jesus, the music will reflect Jesus.

Where and how can we put ourselves in places and spaces to meet people we don't already know?

Always make sharing Jesus a gift. Not forced, accompanied by listening, welcome, and grace.

How do we embrace the people Jesus sends us and not just those we choose?

Practice Cultural Humanity not assuming you know about people but allowing them to share their stories.