

# Trustee and Council Chair Break-Out Session Guide

## Why Evangelization and Discipleship Matter

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### Drop in Mass Attendance- 2013

- According to a 2013 Compass article (<https://www.thecompassnews.org/2013/05/drop-in-mass-attendance-a-concern-to-diocese/>), attendance at weekend Masses had dropped by 21%. 78% of Catholics believe they can be good Catholics without going to Mass. This trend has continued, and the Covid pandemic has accelerated it.
- *We initially responded by asking the following question...*

### How do we get people back to church?

- What we learned is that the goal of increasing Mass attendance, though crucial, will not happen unless it is the fruit of living as a friend and follower of Jesus Christ during the other 167 hours of the week.
- Focusing only on increasing Mass attendance is incomplete without restoring the balance between Sunday worship and what is happening in the lives of Catholics during the week.
- *This realization then led to next question...*

### How do we bring people into a relationship with the person of Jesus?

- The Catholic Church teaches, and has always taught, that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, lived out during the week as his disciple, is the springboard for a meaningful participation in the Sacraments and the Mass. For many Catholics, not living as disciple during the week has led to a perception that the local parish, and even the Mass, are not relevant to their lives.
- This is why the mission of the Diocese of Green Bay is so important: "As friends and followers of Jesus, we are devoted to fostering households and communities of discipleship through the mission and ministry of the Catholic Church."
- With this, the Diocese of Green Bay encouraged initiatives and programs like Alpha, The Search, bible studies, etc. as tools for parishes to make disciples; that is, to call forth people to become friends and followers of Jesus Christ.

### Do we, as leaders, live out what we are asking people to do?

- Since we can only give to others what we have, it is important for the leaders in the parish, including trustees and council members, to disciple each other through faith sharing, shared prayer, and sharing life with each other.

Here are a few examples:

1. As a council, take 15 minutes to pray, read and discuss God's Word with Lectio Divina.  
Resource link: ([Lectio Divina in English \(catholic.bible\)](#))
2. Intercessory prayer: Begin the meeting with intercessory prayer by voicing personal intentions and/or petitions about specific needs of the parish.
3. Faith sharing activity: At the beginning of the meeting, have one member of the council briefly share with the group why their Catholic faith is important to them and how their relationship with Jesus helped them to become a better person.

- By engaging in these discipleship habits as trustees and council members, the goal of making disciples in your parish community can be better realized.

### **The goal of the Diocese of Green Bay:**

- Vision: We are missionary disciples striving to lead all people to the Kingdom of God.
- Priority: Calling forth and forming leaders who love Jesus and live his mission, especially among young adults and families.
- Bp. Ricken has set forth two goals which are essential to achieving our mission:
  - By 2025, we will call forth and form hundreds of missionary leaders who will mobilize thousands of missionary disciples who disciple at least two others.
  - By 2025, we will call forth and form 30 seminarians to be missionary leaders to the priesthood.

### **Why should we care?**

- We care deeply about the institution of the Church, or why else would you be here?
- We are deeply concerned about passing on the faith to our children and grandchildren and are saddened when they stop coming to church
- We want to be part of an enlivened, renewed, and engaged Church, rather than overseeing and managing its decline
- As a trustee or other leader, you are now entrusted not only with stewardship of parish resources, but with the Mission: to “Go and Make Disciples” (Mt. 28:19) This involves commitment and sacrifice, and you want to make sure your efforts are worthwhile.
- *Moving from caring to committing, to live and lead others to relationship with Jesus, and do the following...*

### **What should we do?**

- Engage your role on council as disciples first!
- Invite God’s Word into all council meetings and pray together to discern the Lord’s will for you and for the families and members of your community
- Invest in substantial evangelization and discipleship by creating, supporting and leading a vibrant Evangelization Committee as a core of Pastoral Council
- Invest in hospitality and welcoming – live it, lead it, inspire others to do the same
- Invest in a mission plan focused on 3 – 5 relevant goals in evangelization, discipleship and community impact

### **Links to Discipleship Resources**

- [Ultimate Relationship - CCO](#): This is a booklet by Catholic Christian Outreach that presents the Gospel clearly and simply with an opportunity to respond to Christ’s invitation into a relationship with him.
- [Rediscover Jesus: An Invitation by Matthew Kelly](#) An invitation to seek deeply personal answers to our deeply personal questions about Jesus and the meaning of life.
- [Living the Fruit of the Spirit by Josh Danis](#) A book on how God’s grace can transform your world.