



## Gospel Living Intentional Daily Life Catholicism

*"Christ has no body now but yours.  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours." - Theresa of Avila*

### The Mission of the Church

The Church's mission is to evangelize: to bring the Good News to the world, transforming it into the Kingdom of God. It has three parts:

- We begin in **conversion**, committing to a personal relationship with Jesus and following as disciples.
- We **witness**, living all aspects of our lives by the counter-cultural values of the Gospel.
- We **share** our faith with others, inviting them to "come and see" for themselves.

This is the work of each Catholic: to live as **intentional disciples**. Being baptized or confirmed is not enough. Attending Mass or contributing financially is not enough. We also have to respond to the sacramental grace we receive and Jesus' invitation to follow Him in the way we live our lives every day.

### The Mission of the Parish

Regardless of whatever mission statement they may write, all parishes have the same mission as the rest of the Church. The role of the parish is to **form and equip intentional disciples**.

This means being focused on what happens outside the walls of the parish rather than inside. It means inviting active and inactive Catholics, and those who don't know the Church to meet Jesus and join in our mission. It means connecting our Scripture and Tradition to the specifics of daily life and providing practical tools.

### Transforming the Parish

Everything a parish does should contribute to its mission to evangelize and be an act of formation. This takes discipline to be intentional and say no to what is not essential. A mission-oriented mindset can change everything a parish does, from the budget and announcements to what events are planned. We suggest ideas for transforming each aspect of parish life to focus on mission.

### Targeting Disciples

A key element of this approach is to focus energy into formation that will actually reach potential disciples. This formation is *not* just for the 5% of your parish who come to parish events during the week. This means working intentionally and creatively, including the following:

- Understanding schedules, lifestyles, and the barriers that keep people from participating.
- Ensuring that your offerings are very effective at supporting ministry in the world, and then promoting them by clearly communicating how they do so.
- Offering formation opportunities where people already are present: as part of weekly liturgy, immediately following liturgy, for parents when they bring their children for religious education, etc.
- Especially considering inactive or less-active Catholics and those who have never experienced the Church, and offering what they would be most likely to participate in.
- Learning what barriers keep your active parishioners from inviting others, and how you can overcome them.

### What We Offer

- **Parish ideas and resources.** We offer many free ideas and resources through our website, including references to articles, books, videos, scripts, and other websites. We also create high-quality handouts on Gospel Living topics that can be customized for your parish community.
- **Parish consulting.** We can work with your staff and lay leadership to understand the Church's mission and how your community can effectively embrace it.
- **Parish workshops and retreats.** We offer a parish retreat and a leadership training on Gospel Living. We also offer introductory Scripture classes and the year-long Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life retreat.

### Learn More

Find out more by viewing our website, and especially by viewing our "Introduction to Gospel Living" workshop online.

#### Our mission:

Equipping parishes to fulfill *their* mission: forming and equipping intentional disciples to bring the Good News to the world.

#### Gospel Living Ministries

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## But How?

The Gospel Living approach is based on the goals and objectives offered by the U.S. bishops in their pastoral plans for evangelization (*Go and Make Disciples*) and adult faith formation (*Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*). These plans emphasize the goals of conversion, witness, and sharing.



## Daily Life

The Gospel Living approach is built around discipleship and daily life. Daily life is where we primarily encounter God and pray. Daily life is where we witness to the world through our actions. Daily life is where we share the Gospel with those who need to hear it. Daily life is what makes the Gospel "relevant."

Our faith informs the way we work, what we buy, what we do with our money, our relationship with the poor and vulnerable, how we act as citizens and neighbors, how we use our time, how we invite others to experience Christ, and much more.

An effective daily life approach must be:

- **Applied:** connecting the dots between our faith and the specifics of daily life, rather than abstracts and "spiritualized" interpretations that let us off the hook.
- **In Depth:** teaching full concepts, rather than a shallower take on isolated lectionary readings.
- **Equipping:** offering practical tools for how to live by the Gospel, instead of just high-level concepts.

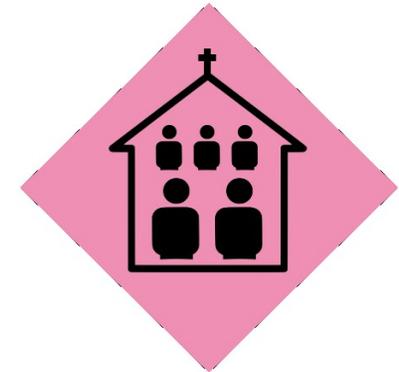
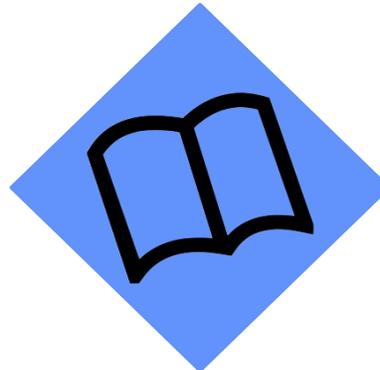
## The Formation Approach

The bishops state that "a **comprehensive, multi-faceted, and coordinated approach** to adult faith formation is necessary." We empower parishes to creatively take this approach so that parishioners notice and respond.

### Comprehensive

We have sought out the most helpful teachings from Scripture and the Catholic Tradition to best form intentional disciples for their daily life ministry. These topics fall into three categories:

- **Gospel values:** Here we start with Scripture and Tradition, and connect them to daily life. These core themes inform discipleship, offering the context and depth that makes individual Scripture readings more meaningful. These include Call & Vocation, Sabbath & Jubilee, Stewardship, and more.
- **Aspects of daily life:** Here we start with daily life and reach back into Scripture and Tradition to learn how our faith informs us. These include Work & Occupation, Money, the Environment, Food, Time, and more.
- **Tools:** These are practical tools to equip us for discipleship. These include the Daily Examen, Rule of Life, Talent & Gift frameworks, tools for discernment, and more.



### Multi-faceted

For each topic, we offer resources, ideas, and guidelines for formation across parish life: preaching, liturgy, children's activities, small faith groups, handouts, videos, social justice activities, social media, take-home activities for families, parish dialogue, and even how the parish leadership can model through internal policies.

### Coordinated

The most powerful way to offer this formation is to focus on each topic for a single Sunday or over the course of months. The topic is reinforced at the same time throughout the parish, allowing the parish to truly learn together and go deeper. We offer recommendations for aligning this learning with the lectionary cycle and secular calendar.

*"Parish leaders need to provide a variety of learning activities and resources to meet the diverse needs of parishioners."*

*"Learn to see and take advantage of every opportunity to help adults appreciate and grow in their faith."*

*Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*  
U.S. Bishops