Orthodox Evangelization Initiative

Planning in Progress

Joe Kormos
Fr. Joseph Gibson
Goals

• Develop materials that can be and are used by Orthodox Christians for developing better skills for Evangelization

• So that we:
  • Share the good news of the Gospel
  • Help the parishes to grow
Audience

• Persons
  – Knowledgeable Laity
    • The primary audience is knowledgeable lay persons who have potential gifts for being effective at evangelization and are reasonably knowledgeable in the Orthodox faith. These materials are not a catechism in Orthodox Christianity.
  – Clergy
    • Many of the skills covered in the materials will be valuable to clergy as well.
    • Many clergy will want to lead their parishes in exploring this material
    • Some materials should probably be created for use by clergy only

• Parishes
  – These materials will be of primary value in parishes that are reasonably healthy and vibrant. Parishes in serious decline probably need to focus in other areas.
Potential Material Formats

Documents - for continuing reference

Videos – scripted edited - 6-12 minutes – tell a foundational story

“Videolets”
• 1-3 minute testimonials – word of mouth
• “how to” - learn by seeing

PowerPoint
Slides, scripted, recorded
How will this material be used/delivered?

**Group Training**
- Parish Workshops
- Deanery Workshops
- Diocesan Conference

**Website**
- Personal study /use
- Class prep/brush up
How will this material be used/delivered?

• This is still under discussion.
• Potentially:
  – Personal study
    • Ad hoc/self study materials used (viewed or read) by persons – not necessarily as part of a parish initiative.
  – A series of classes taught in a parish, or a Deanery by:
    • The priest or a deacon
    • a Diocesan or regional specialist trainer
    • Combination of the above supported with various videos and other materials
  – A combination of parish and self study
• A diocesan conference on this topic
  – Single event or annual
Proposed Orthodox Parish Evangelization & Growth Cycle

1. Identify
   - Persons
   - Groups
   - Create Awareness
   - Build Trust
   - Generate Curiosity
   - Foster Openness

2. Inform
   - Inquirer Friendly Events
   - Gatherings
   - Groups
   - Worship Services
   - Nurture Questions
   - Surface Concerns

3. Invite
   - Worship
   - Personal Gifts
   - Parish Life
   - Personal Relationships

4. Interest
   - Doctrine
   - Praxis
   - Parish Zeal & Energy

5. Instruct
   - Personal Discipleship
   - Parish Zeal & Energy

6. Incorporate
   - Worship
   - Personal Gifts
   - Parish Life
   - Personal Relationships

7. Inspire
   - Persons
   - Groups
   - Create Awareness
   - Build Trust
   - Generate Curiosity
   - Foster Openness

Topics/areas to be covered in Evangelization Training

Topics/areas that will NOT be covered in Evangelization Training
Orthodox Evangelization Toolbox

Generating Curiosity

Personal Tools & Skills
- “Being Nice” – Love & Kindness
- Personal Narrative
- Conversion Stories & References
- Active Listening
- Helpful Probing
- Situational Fluency
- Comparative Knowledge

Parish Tools & Skills
- Evangelization & Growth Cycle
- Focus: Understanding the religious landscape in your community
- Annual growth planning
- Inquirer Event Development
- Awareness/ “Findability” Tactics
- Strengths Assessment

Pre-requisites – A reasonable knowledge & application of Orthodox Doctrine and Practice

Pre-requisites – A reasonably vibrant parish that lives a life in Christ and is striving to improve
Building the Orthodox Evangelization Toolbox

Potential Course Outline
Each box could be a session

Tool 1 -- Just Be Nice
- Review
- Before we grow we need to stop driving people away
- Video: bad behavior
- Turnoffs

Tool 2 a Narrative Tune Up
Students share
Pair up practice delivery
Tune up tips

Overview
- Goals - toolbox to generate curiosity (more)
- Orthodox evang. Problem – RC/Evangelical methods do not necessarily work
- Framework – the cycle
- What we’re NOT doing
- Barriers
- Principles of Orthodox Evangelization
- Evangelization video
- Course Outline

Tool 2 - Personal Narrative
- Why story telling; elements of a good story.
- How God has worked in your life
- Video examples
- Narrative outline
- Homework – write yours

Tools 4 –n Other Tools/ Tips
- Situations leading to openness; Cues
- Opening questions
- Establish trust
- What not to do
- Time to move on

Understanding “Seekers
- Different approaches different backgrounds
- Key issues; what to be prepared for; points of emphasis
- Catholics, Liturgical Protestants, Evangelicals etc.

Tool 3 Convert Stories
- Videos of convert stories
- What I found in the Orthodox Church
- How I could have gotten here sooner
- What to do/not to do
- Stuff you never thought of; what’s it like to be a visitor
- Homework – Build parish convert stories

Targeting/Focus areas
- Aden stuff --Religious landscape of America
- Discerning your parish’s evangelization focus

Parish Evangelization Planning
- Sizing the evangelization effort
- # new persons – to sustain; to grow
- Key constraint – flow (more inquiries) or generating serious interest
- Awareness building target definition
  - Positioning statement
  - Communication mix/plan

Inquirer Friendly Events
- Getting your parish on the map
- Individual events
- On going (e.g. Arseny)
- Planning an inquirers class
- QA nite

Situational Fluency Making the Most of Opportunities
- Friends family
- Situational
- Seasonal

Blue boxes offer a more parish planning focus

Grey boxes focus on personal tools/skills info