

Evangelism Essentials: An Assessment Tool

What is evangelism? How do we understand it and carry it out as congregations and individual believers? Evangelism contains the word evangel, which means "the good news of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ." Often, we call this the gospel.

Evangelism involves a message and a messenger; the message is Jesus, the Savior of the world. The messenger may be a person sharing her faith story, a young adult inviting a friend to worship or a congregational event, or a member praying with a friend in crisis. The messenger may also be a congregation united in its effort to share the good news through neighborhood-focused children's ministries, community calling, new neighbor outreach, radio ministries, a new worship service targeted to a particular generation or culture-specific community, or a support group ministry to people with a particular need. Congregations committed to effective evangelism share the good news internally with members and externally with local residents in ways that meaningfully connect with people.

Use this assessment tool, developed as a companion piece to Making Christ Known: A Guide to Evangelism for Congregations ([Augsburg Fortress](#), ISBN #0-8066-3334-4 \$9.95), to help measure your congregation's effectiveness in the ministries of evangelism and to determine which areas might be enhanced or strengthened. Consider each of the four areas of effective congregational evangelism to determine where your congregation can grow in its domestic mission emphasis. Keep in mind that this assessment tool is aimed at helping you dream the possibilities; very few congregations will be able to engage all the suggested ministries with equal attention. Use this resource as an evaluation tool and a discussion starter with key leaders in your congregation.

A Framework for Organizing Your Mission

Making Christ Known

Hospitality and Response Evangelism: Welcome Them In!

- Preparing the congregation to receive and welcome
- Providing hospitality in worship and congregational life
- Providing intentional follow-up and response

I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Matthew 25:35

Discipleship and Incorporation Evangelism: Build Them Up!

- Integrating and discipling new members
- Deepening faith and commitment with present and new members
- Closing the side and back doors

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him. Colossians 2:6-7

Intentional Community Outreach: Send Them Out!

- Embracing the Great Commission
- Providing programmatic outreach through various models
- Providing children, youth, family and social ministries

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all. 2 Corinthians 5:14

Communication and Evangelism: Reflect the Light!

- Strengthening the public face of the congregation
- Creating communication strategies appropriate to the gospel of Christ
- Shining as a bright, attractive light to the world around you

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

Evangelism Essentials Assessment Form

Use the following code to fill out the survey:

1 - We could do this;

2 - We could do this better

3 - We already do this well

Hospitality and Response Evangelism

This area of evangelism ministry is concerned with issues of invitation, welcome and response. The focus is on those who on their own initiative or through the invitation of a friend participate in the worship life or program ministries of your congregation. Hospitality and response evangelism is centered on the power of an invitation to "come and see." Primary areas of concern include: congregational climate, rituals of hospitality, hospitable and welcoming worship, focused invitation and intentional follow-up and response. The key connection in this area of evangelism is with the worship life of your congregation.

First Impressions

___ Our local community is aware of our congregation's ministry through our publicity efforts including direct mail, invitational evangelism, door-to door calling and Internet presence.

___ Our church sign is visible, easy-to-read, informative and inviting.

___ Our church building and grounds are attractive and well-maintained.

___ Our parking lot is well marked with directional signs and has spaces for guests close to the main entrance.

_____ We help guests feel welcome as soon as they enter the parking lot.

_____ Members are regularly encouraged to invite their unchurched friends, relatives and neighbors to congregational events with them through friendship Sundays and other congregationally- sponsored outreach events.

Narthex neighborliness

_____ The main entrance of our congregation's building is bright and welcoming, with signs and maps posted internally and externally.

_____ Our church building is accessible to guests and members who are physically challenged.

_____ Greeters and ushers offer a special welcome and conversation with guests.

_____ Members with a gift of hospitality are available to serve as "narthex neighbors," adopting guests during their visit with our congregation

_____ A lay-staffed information table provides up-to-date information on our congregation and its ministries.

_____ Guests and members are encouraged to wear name-tags.

_____ Our nursery is clean, well-staffed, and adequately equipped to provide high-quality infant and toddler care.

_____ We welcome guests in a general, non-obtrusive way in worship.

_____ Children and youth are included fully in the content and leadership of our worship services.

_____ Our worship bulleting is clear, well-presented and printed in everyday language.

_____ We use an effective system for gleaning the names and addresses of guests for follow-up.

_____ Our worship leaders verbally guide worshipers through the parts of the service.

_____ We choose music and hymns which are easy to sing and create community between worshipers.

_____ We offer two different styles of worship services focused on the cross-cultural musical preferences of different generations and ethnic communities being reached.

_____ At communion, guests are informed about the logistics of distribution.

Following Worship

_____ Printed and/or video resources are available for guests explaining Lutheran beliefs and our congregations' ministry.

_____ We host a refreshment and conversation time following worship to which guests are invited.

_____ Lay members of our congregation call on worship guests by phone or in-person within 48 hours of their visit.

_____ Our congregation thanks guests for participating through print or electronic communication.

Discipleship and Incorporation Evangelism

This area of evangelism ministry is concerned with all that a congregation does to incorporate, involve and strengthen the faith of members. It focuses on nurturing new members in their faith development and incorporating them into the life of the congregation. It also focuses on deepening the faith-life and discipleship of every present member of your congregation. The central concern is the formation of disciples who are rooted and grounded in the Christian faith through Christian education, stewardship and serving ministries. Use same code at the beginning of the page.

Disciple-making Ministries

_____ Our new member classes or catechumenal program orient potential members to the theology and practices of the Lutheran Church and to the ministry of our congregation.

_____ Sponsors help members new to the Christian faith or the congregation to become a part of the body of Christ.

_____ Spiritual gifts assessment is an important part of our new member orientation process and is used in the deployment of volunteers within the life of the faith community.

_____ A warm and genuine reception starts our new members down the path of meaningful membership and ministry.

_____ Prayer ministries are a central component of our disciple-making process.

_____ Members are encouraged to be involved in small groups, gender-specific groups, mentoring ministries and Bible study groups for faith growth.

_____ Adult education is a high priority for membership of our congregation.

_____ Youth are effectively disciplined through a well-planned and implemented age specific ministry which includes, but is not limited to an effective confirmation ministry program.

_____ Children are taught the basics of faith in relational ministries hosted throughout the week involving the arts, active experiences, small groups, and electronic media.

_____ All members are encouraged to share generously in response to God through financial offerings, serving ministries and acts of justice and caring in God's world.

_____ Members are encouraged to see their daily lives as the primary place where faith is lived.

_____ Members and guests are equipped to share their faith in their daily life.

_____ Our congregation's athletic teams, seniors group, and special education programs attract others to the congregation.

_____ Through inter-generational events, picnics, dinners, music programs, and special events, our congregation incorporates local residents in the life of the faith community.

Caring Ministries

_____ Our lay-led telephone-care ministry reaches out to all members on a regular basis including: new members, active and non-participating members.

_____ Our shepherding ministry allows us to stay in close touch with every household in our church.

_____ Our Stephen Ministers or congregational care ministers provide special support to members experiencing life transition.

_____ The support group ministry of our congregation is an influential presence to people in our local neighborhoods and community.

_____ Deployed ministry teams serve in a number of ways in the name of Christ with local people in need.

_____ Our service and advocacy ministries are a vital way of sharing the Christian faith with others and deepening the faith life of believers.

Intentional Community Outreach

This area of evangelism focuses on all that a congregation does to reach out, support and serve its neighbors in the name of Jesus Christ. Intentional community outreach focuses on helping members to "go and tell" others about the power of the gospel to change their lives. It concerns all the ministries of a congregation that help members reach out in word and deed to share their faith and model Christ's love for others through ministries of kindness, support and justice.

The purpose of intentional community outreach is to reach those who do not yet have a relationship with Jesus Christ and the Christian community. The central arenas of intentional community outreach include these kinds of ministries: faith sharing of members; new neighbor outreach; calling; social, children, family, age-

specific and culture-specific initiatives. Use same codes in the beginning of the document.

Faith-Sharing and Neighborhood Calling

____ We support members with invitational evangelism efforts by hosting seasonal emphases and quarterly invite-a-friend Sundays and/or events.

____ We provide members with several opportunities a year to learn faith-sharing skills through adult forums, new member groups, youth groups and Christian education for children.

____ Monthly lay faith sharing stories in worship have become an important part of our effort to help our members feel comfortable talking to others about their faith.

____ We provide "new neighbor packets" to help encourage members to invite their newly moved neighbors to church.

____ We have studied the demographics of the neighborhood around our church and have planned for ways to meaningfully connect with our neighbors.

____ Each year, we do a canvas of our community meeting our neighbors, distributing brochures, and inviting people to worship and other special events.

____ Our youth group does an annual scavenger hunt in our community, distributing brochures, and collecting food for a local pantry and inviting residents to our church.

Children, Family, Social, and Culture-Specific Ministries

____ We value the nurturing of younger generations through our pre-school, after-school, Christian day school, vacation summer day camp, parents night out and day care ministries.

____ Our congregation added a worship service to our weekly schedule which is focused specifically on the music and language of a particular population of local residents who are not attending our other worship services.

____ We provide specialized ministry to a particular group with special needs in our community.

____ Our support groups give community residents a place to receive help and hope in the name of Christ.

____ Our congregation has a reputation in the local community as a reaching and serving church because of our involvement with local events, organizations and social service agencies.

____ We are visible in the community on issues of public policy and human need.

_____ A number of our congregation's activities take place in public spaces, like restaurants or schools.

_____ Our congregation sponsors community-focused events like Christian parenting classes, prayer and healing ministries, youth ministry, job training, literacy, or "English as second language" classes.

_____ Local groups meet regularly in our building.

Communication and Public Relations

This area of evangelism focuses on everything a congregation does to share the good news of the Gospel publicly in its community with neighbors and congregational members. Issues of concern in this area of evangelism include: publicity and advertising (newspaper, radio, TV, billboards, direct mail, Internet, and telephone); internal communication means (newsletters, bulletins, information centers, e-mail, and video projection in worship) and visitation tools (brochures, new neighbor packets, guest response letters).

_____ Our congregation's mission statement is clearly identified on all printed and electronic communication shared with members and with the community.

_____ Our congregation has a simple, distinctive logo that appears on all letterhead, bulletins, newsletters, brochures and advertising.

_____ Our attractive single-sheet brochure introduces our congregation and its ministries to persons outside the church.

_____ Our brochure is distributed to first-time guests in a packet, to new residents, and by direct mail or door-to-door canvassing in our local community.

_____ We advertise the ministries of the congregation through: banners, brochures, bumper-stickers, lawn signs, window decals, calling cards, community newsletters, and door-hangers.

_____ We have a large, easy-to-read, well-lighted (and strategically positioned) sign identifying our church building

_____ Our church newsletter focuses on current events and future opportunities, rather than reporting on what has already taken place.

_____ Our worship space is equipped with a top-quality sound and visual projection system.

_____ We are comfortable using modern media to communicate the gospel in our worship services.

_____ We have an answering machine or voice-mail system that answers the phone after hours.

_____ Our telephone directory listings in the white-and yellow-pages are helpful and informative for newcomers.

_____ We often send brief, well-written news releases to local newspapers.

_____ We use print ads and other invitational print media to attract unchurched people to our congregation, especially around Christmas and Easter.

_____ We use local public media, like the radio, TV/cable, telephone calling campaigns, press releases, billboards and a web-page on the Internet as tools for evangelism ministry.

_____ Our congregation has established a "homepage" on the World Wide Web, has means of receiving feedback from Web users, and regularly updates the page with current information.

Writer: Marta Poling-Goldenne, Produced by the Division for Congregational Ministries, ELCA.