

Homecoming

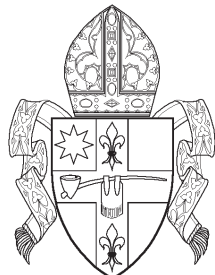
The purpose of this simple outreach program is to invite inactive Catholics back to the faith community and the Sacraments.

The goals of *Homecoming* are to provide opportunity to listen to those who have left, to reconcile them with the Body of Christ, to heal past hurts, to discuss Church teaching, and to provide talks on issues, such as divorce and annulments, Church teaching since Vatican II, and the Sacraments.

This program is accomplished by a parish team who are solid in faith, who are good listeners, and who are passionate to share the love of Jesus Christ and his Church. This practical program can be adapted to any parish and can be modified in any way to suit the needs of the parish community.



So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began. (Luke 15:17-24)



**Catholic Diocese
of Peoria**

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Homecoming – Catholic Diocese of Peoria

“*Homecoming*” was composed by Mrs. Sharon [Bannon] Serangeli as method to invite inactive Catholics back to the Catholic Church. Sharon, a retired registered nurse, was inspired by Fr. Alvin Illig, CSP, at a conference in Chicago in the early 80’s and received ‘his’ passion to evangelize. Fr. Illig had devoted his life to the task that Pope Paul VI called “the essential mission of the Church.” Fr. Illig touched by the Holy Spirit, labored to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the truth of the Catholic faith before the duty to evangelize was widely accepted. “*Homecoming*” is a practical program based on Sharon's experience that can be easily customize to any parish size. Sharon continues to use “*Homecoming*” in her parish during Lent/Easter and/or Advent/Christmas seasons.

This “*Homecoming*” was adapted from a program created by Joyce Yeast, a parishioner from Holy Trinity Parish in Bloomington, Illinois. Joyce had started going to church with a Catholic friend of hers and her interest in the Catholic faith grew until it led her to RCIA. She jumped right in with both feet! Joyce became an active part of the Holy Trinity Parish Library staff, took classes to become an annulment processor, started the Evangelization Ministry, worked on the funeral brunch committee, etc. Her love was for evangelization and she developed the original “*Homecoming*” program at Holy Trinity. Joyce served on the Diocesan Evangelization Commission during the 90’s. Joyce died January 17, 2003 of cancer. We dedicate this program to the memory of Joyce Yeast.

The material was edited by Diana Bes, Associate Director in the Office of Evangelization. Diana writes and publishes *Go Forth*, the Peoria Diocese’s evangelization newsletter. She is the diocesan contact person for the annual National Evangelization Team [NET] visit to the diocese. Diana has also established Theology on Tap, a young adult ministry, in the diocese.

Homecoming was translated into Spanish by Maggie Montellano, Associate Director, Hispanic Ministry.

The materials in this packet are also available at www.cdop.org/evangelization.

Additional reference materials:

On Evangelization in the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi)

Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI, (December 8, 1975). Available from:
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html

On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World (Christifideles Laici)

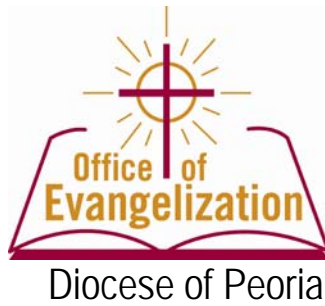
Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, (December 30, 1988). Available from:
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici_en.html

The Church in America (Ecclesia in America)

Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, January 22, 1999. Available from
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_22011999_ecclesia-in-america_en.html

Go and Make Disciples, A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Committee on Evangelization, November 18, 1992. Available for order from the USCCB (800) 235-8722.



Homecoming

This information is available for download from our website www.cdop.org/evangelization.

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OVERVIEW OF HOMECOMING PROGRAM

The purpose of this simple outreach program is to invite inactive Catholics back to the faith community and the Sacraments.

Goal – Have three to four sessions over a span of 3-4 weeks

- a. Provide listening session
- b. Provide opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation when desired
- c. Affirm the community parish's love and concern for each person
- d. Provide good, sound reading material
- e. Apologize sincerely to anyone who has been hurt by a person representing the Church
- f. Discuss honestly the Church's teaching
- g. Provide talks from those well versed in subjects such as:
 - Divorce & Annulments
 - Church teaching since Vatican II
 - Sacraments

Preparatory meetings: Start 2 months in advance

- a) Team – personally invite persons who know their faith and are able to share their faith with zeal and joy. They must be prayerful and in line with the Church.
(It is good to have the Pastor present at some prep. meetings, so all team members can be approved by him and/or to give any advice or suggestions.)
- b) Discuss date, day, time, and place.
- c) Decide who will promote or advertise (good to have 2-3 people on this project)
 - Newspaper ads – town paper & regional paper (some town papers will put ad in calendar event for free)
 - Church bulletin
 - Catholic Post
 - Posters
 - Word of mouth – personally inviting someone you know, who no longer attends, is very effective
 - Send letters to the inactive people registered in the parish
- d) Person in charge of simple refreshments – coffee, tea, pop
- e) Person in charge of setting up meetings. Possibly chairs in circle or some comfortable setting. Also need nametags and pens.
- f) Team – greet people as they come in, offer refreshments
- g) Person to open session in prayer and offer a short Scripture reading.
- h) Leader – makes introductions, sets people at ease, brief description of the evening agenda
- i) Close with prayer and fill out form – attached (It is nice to have the Pastor present for the first night to greet the people and introduce himself, then exit for the first meeting. Some people feel awkward discussing things with the Pastor present. It is totally up to the Pastor if he would like to be present at all meetings or not.)

Session 1
(suggested time 7 pm – 9 pm)

- Greeting & Refreshments
- Opening Prayer
- Short Scripture Reading
- Introduction & Announcements
 - Have Parish bulletin on hand
- Once people are at ease we ask the simple question to express their image or experience of the Church.
 - Usually this is enough to get things moving along.
 - This is a night to listen, not to be judgmental.
 - Be ready to apologize for any hurt they have had in the past.
 - What is needed most is compassion and understanding from the Team.
 - Remember you invited them to come back home.
 - Whether these images or experiences or true or false they are real hurts to these inactive people.
- Team member talk
 - Close to the end of the session or if the people are not opening up.
 - Team member who has returned to Church gives a 10 minute (no longer) witness of why he/she left the Church, how he/she came back, and where they are now.
 - This witness talk should be truthful, to the point, and hopeful and uplifting.
 - Usually there is discussion after this.
- Closing Prayer
- Post-Session Team meeting
 - After the first session, the team should go over forms to see if divorce and annulment session is necessary.
 - If so, contact person well versed in this subject to come and speak to the group. It can be your Pastor, someone from the Tribunal office, or a deacon who is knowledgeable about the Church's teaching on marriage, divorce and annulments.

Session 2
(suggested time 7 pm – 9 pm)

- Greeting & Refreshments
- Opening Prayer
- Short Scripture Reading
- Introduction & Announcements
 - Have Parish bulletin on hand
- Divorce & Annulments Informational Talk with guest speaker
- Question & Answer time
 - This usually takes up the rest of the session
- Closing Prayer

Session 3
(suggested time 7 pm – 9 pm)

- Greeting & Refreshments
- Opening Prayer
- Short Scripture Reading
- Introduction & Announcements
 - Any events coming up in the Parish, possibly a Parish Mission
 - Encourage the returnees to attend
 - Have Parish bulletin on hand
- Sacraments Talk with guest speaker
 - 20-30 minute presentation on the Sacraments with emphasis on Eucharist and Reconciliation
 - Touches on the major directional changes the Church had experienced since Vatican II and what the Church is experiencing at the present time
- Question & Answer time
- Closing Prayer

Homecoming – Catholic Diocese of Peoria

Team should try and keep in contact with returnees by:

- Greeting them and introducing them to others in the Parish after Sunday Mass, or
- By calling to invite them to a Parish function, or
- By sitting with them at Mass.

This one on one contact is the real faith builder. Never being pushy, just an invitation is enough. Remember we are welcoming them back to the faith community and the table of the Lord.

For more information, contact:

Office of Evangelization
613 NE Jefferson Ave.
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e-mail: evangelization@cdop.org

Recommended Resources:

Books

- *Returning Home to Your Catholic Faith* by Sally L. Mews
- *A Handbook for Returning Catholics* by William J. Bausch
- *What Catholics Really Believe – 52 Answers to Common Misconceptions about the Catholic Faith* by Karl Keating

Handouts on Divorce and Annulment (if necessary)

Tapes

- *The Mass – Center of Our Faith* by Scott Hahn and Tom Curran

Website

- A list of evangelization resources <http://www.usccb.org/publishing/evangelization.shtml>

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOMECOMING INVITEES

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Where did you hear about “HOMECOMING”?

Poster _____ Friend _____ Journal Star _____

Parish Bulletin _____ Town Paper _____

Other (specify) _____

HOW MAY WE HELP YOU?

_____ I would like to meet with the Parish Priest.

_____ I would like to meet with one of the Deacons.

_____ I need a review of the basic facts of the Catholic Faith.

_____ I need a Parish Registration Form.

_____ I just came to listen.

_____ I need some specific information as how to get back to the Church and the Sacraments.
Please specify the topic for which information is needed.

_____ Please write your concerns or comments. _____

Thank you for coming!

PRAYER FOR HOMECOMING SESSION

My Jesus,

I believe that You are present in the
Blessed Sacrament.

I love You above all things and
I desire You in my soul.

Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart,
as though You were already there.

I embrace You and unite myself wholly to You;
Permit not that I should ever be separated from You.

Amen.

TEAM PRAYER

(Prior to each Homecoming Meeting)

“Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness. At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.” (Matt. 9:35-38)

“Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God is at hand for you.’” (Luke 10:8-9)

- A. Lord God, you know how weak I am, and how selfish I can be. What would I be like, and how many people would I have damaged and hurt, if you had not sent your beloved Son to redeem me?
- B. He has shepherded me to the path of righteousness, and leads me with his unique patience toward the active holiness that is life in abundance. In his tenderness and mercy, I have discovered the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price. I cannot let such precious blessings go unshared.
- A. Heavenly Father, pour down upon me the Holy Spirit who, as Jesus promises, will make me his witness to the ends of the earth. Through prayer, lead me, as you led Peter and Paul and all your chosen instruments, to the accomplishment of your holy will.
- B. Give me the courage, the wisdom, the zeal, the faith, and the love needed to be like these disciples; salt for the earth and light for the world.
- A. Make me, also a fisher of men, a harvester of souls, and an evangelist, who, with great joy, carries the good news to all the nations and to every creature.
- B. To do all this, there is much in me that still needs your redeeming and healing touch. Begin the task right now by talking to my heart about the things I am doing wrong. Show me the things I must do with more dedication and greater generosity.

All: Speak, Lord, for in this silence truly your servant listens.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be

EXAMPLE OF LENT/EASTER HOMECOMING PROGRAM

COMING HOME FOR EASTER

“While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.” Luke 15:20

What:

A journey of faith and healing; invitation and welcome to Catholics who wish to return to the Church this Lent.

Where:

St. Edward's Church Parish Center [located across the parking lot from church]

When:

Session I - Thursday at 7 pm March 23 - Parish Center

Session II - Thursday at 7 pm March 30 - Parish Center

Session III - Thursday at 7 pm April 6 - Parish Center

Session IV - Thursday at 7 pm April 13 - Parish Center

All sessions will begin with prayer and a scripture reading.

**EXAMPLE OF LENT/EASTER TEAM MEETINGS
(during homecoming session)**

HOMECOMING

TEAM MEETINGS

- March 23 Meet and pray at 6:00 pm in the Cry Room. Mass will follow at 6:30 pm.
At 7:00 pm Homecoming will begin at the Parish Center.
- There will be coffee and hot chocolate.
 - We will begin with a short Scripture reading followed by the Lord’s Prayer.
 - Introduction of (Name) who will give a witness talk.
 - There will be an opportunity for questions by the participants and opportunity to share why they left the Church and why they are interested in coming back.
 - Closing prayer.
- March 30 Meet and pray at 6:00 pm in the Cry Room. Mass will follow at 6:30 pm.
At 7:00 pm Homecoming will begin at the Parish Center.
- (Name) will speak on the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation
- April 6 Meet and pray at 6:00 pm in the Cry Room. Mass will follow at 6:30 pm.
At 7:00 pm Homecoming will begin at the Parish Center.
- (Name) will speak on the Divorce & Annulments
- April 13 Meet and pray at 6:00 pm in the Cry Room. Mass will follow at 6:30 pm.
- At 7:00 pm Homecoming will begin at the Parish Center.
 - (Name) will speak on the Mass, Symbols and Traditions of the Church.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EVANGELIZATION

Available for order from the USCCB (800) 235-8722.

<http://www.usccb.org/publishing/evangelization.shtml#atimetolisten>

Ministry through the Lens of Evangelization

Major Presentations from N.A.I.C.E. 2003

Evangelization is the essential mission of the Church. Christ calls us to follow him yet there is no discipleship without evangelization, and there is no evangelization without disciples. *Ministry through the Lens of Evangelization* celebrates the link between ministry and discipleship. It contains the proceedings of the first North American Institute for Catholic Evangelization (NAICE) held in Portland, Oregon in 2003. Contributors include Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Rev. Ronald Rolheiser, Rev. Donald Senior, Carole Eipers, Msgr. Raymond East, Bishop Gregory, Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, Archbishop Vlazny, Rev. Eric Law, and Robert McCarty.

Church Without Borders

Church Without Borders examines the experiences of young people from the United States and Latin America who share their faith through creative Inter-American missionary programs. During the last five centuries, missionaries have dedicated their lives to bringing Christianity to the Americas. As a result of their efforts, churches were built, schools begun, and entire communities were formed. *Church Without Borders* also illustrates the need for all Catholics to appreciate the traditions and cultures that every Catholic brings to the faith and how each have a connection in Christ.

Thy Kingdom Come

A Manual for Evangelization Staff

Revised edition is designed for the use and training of those involved in the work of evangelization. Contains a preface, general information on the Catholic approach to evangelization, and specific sections on evangelization at the diocesan and parish levels. A resource section includes foundational documents, materials from Pope John Paul II and the U.S. bishops, and related organizations. Preface by Most Rev. Michael J. Sheehan, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Evangelization.

<http://www.usccb.org/publishing/5-304.pdf>

A Time to Listen . . . A Time to Heal

Resource Directory for Reaching Out to Inactive Catholics

Building on *Go and Make Disciples*, the bishops' pastoral plan for evangelization, this new directory was developed to further Pope John Paul II's call for reconciliation. The directory includes reflections, models, and faith sharing guides for evangelization staffs and all those involved in mission work.

Here I Am, Send Me

A Conference Response to the Evangelization of African Americans

The U.S. bishops focus on The National Black Catholic Pastoral Plan, which is included in this volume, and respond to the topic of evangelization among the African American community.

The Hispanic Presence in the New Evangelization in the United States

In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of a national office for Hispanic ministry in this country, the U.S. bishops issued this English/Spanish publication on the Hispanic presence and the relationship between faith and culture.

Toward a Pastoral Approach to Culture

The Pontifical Council for Culture outlines proposals for evangelization.