

# Parish Home Visitation Program

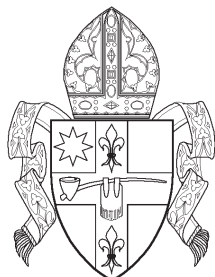
Home Visitation Ministry is an important part of parish outreach.

This program involves reaching out in charity to those members of our parish who attend infrequently, to those who have left our parish, and to those who don't know about us.

The *Parish Home Visitation Program* is a welcoming ministry, a way of "opening the doors to Christ." This is accomplished one home visit at a time by parish participants who are solid in faith, who are good listeners, and who are passionate to share the love of Jesus Christ and his Church.

*Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'* (Matthew 25:37-40)

The *Parish Home Visitation Program* can be done at any time by parish visitation teams. Plan it around a parish activity such as a bizarre, parish picnic, dance, supper, etc. or plan it around another parish event such as a parish mission, *Homecoming*, beginning of RCIA, etc.



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of Peoria**

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The *Parish Home Visitation Program* was developed by Mrs. Sharon [Bannon] Serangeli as a method to visit inactive Catholics and invite them 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 eighties 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.

The *Parish Home Visitation Program*, based on Sharon’s experience, is a very practical, systematic method of reaching out to individuals in any parish size. Since the 1980s, Sharon has been using this program to visit inactive Catholics. Sharon and the team at her parish continue to use the *Parish Home Visitation Program* throughout the year to maintain contact with the inactive members of the parish family.

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.

The *Parish Home Visitation Program* was translated into Spanish by Maggie Montellano, Associate Director, Hispanic Ministry.

The materials in this packet are also available at [www.cdop.org/evangelization](http://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](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)**

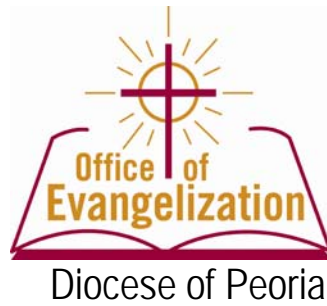
Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, (December 30, 1988). Available from:  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_30121988\\_christifideles-laici\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici_en.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](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.



# Parish Home Visitation Program

This information is available for download from our website  
[www.cdop.org/evangelization](http://www.cdop.org/evangelization).

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Pope John Paul II on Evangelization Brochure

**GENERAL GUIDELINES for Parish Home Visitation Team**

- I. State your name and purpose immediately.  
“Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is \_\_\_\_\_. We are from St. Edward’s Parish.  
(Show name tag or ID as you introduce yourself.)
  
- II. Registered/Non-registered
  - A. If they are registered:
    1. “We are taking the time to visit the parishioners so that we can talk to you personally and hear any concerns or comments you may have about the parish. While we are here, we would also like to quickly update our census. If there is any question that you are uncomfortable with, you do not have to answer it.”
    2. Update Census Card: Check or confirm the information marked in yellow or red. Encourage them to get involved.
    3. Ask questions on the back of the census card.
    4. Give to the Parishioner: talent sheet, bulletin and anything else that may be pertinent to that household.
    5. Thank them for their time.
  
  - B. If they are not registered:
    1. “We are visiting every home in this area to get to know our parishioners better, and to see if there are any baptized Catholics who may want to know more about our parish. Are you or anyone in this house a baptized Catholic?”
      - a. If they are Catholic:  
If they don’t mind, take their name and address and ask them the questions on the sheet. Leave them information on our parish. Mark “Catholic but not registered”.
  
      - b. If they are not Catholic:  
If they are unchurched, invite them to Mass and, if interested, RCIA. If attending another church, thank them for their time and ask them if they have a prayer request. Put it on the sheet designated “Prayer Requests”. Try to get their first name for the prayer because it personalizes it more when we bring it before the Lord.

III. Additional Points for Good Dialogue

1. Pray before beginning the visitation.
2. Bless the house as you approach it.
3. Engage in a little small talk. “Beautiful day, appreciate you taking the time to do this..., nice street you live on, etc.
4. Listen for facts and feelings that might need a pastoral response. Take with you the Shepherd’s heart of Christ.
5. Have good eye contact.
6. Work as a team. If going in 2’s, have one designated spokesperson. That person should also write down the information. The other person clarifies or seeks information you may have forgotten.
7. Use the name of the person as you talk (not necessarily the first name).
8. Smile!
9. Paraphrase and reflect back what the person says.
10. **Don’t:** argue  
take sides  
try to top a story  
preach  
  
**Do:** listen to their stories  
show compassion  
show acceptance  
apologize when necessary  
share the Good News when appropriate  
issue an invitation  
admit you know when necessary

IV. **Points to Remember:**

First, pray! Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you and the person you are about to visit. Now RELAX! The rest is in the hands of the Lord. The Spirit of the lord has anointed you to go and be His witness.

Home visits are based on relations. One “canned” approach will not be appropriate for every situation. In the doing, comes the skill.

Confidentiality: do not share any details of the visit. If you think you may need to talk about a situation with someone, let it be a parish staff person. If it is something that will have to be looked into, be sure to get the parishioner’s permission.

**ROLE PLAY WORKSHEET for Parish Home Visitation Team**

**SITUATION**

**POSSIBLE RESPONSE**

Why are you visiting me?

- Update census
- Ask input on how we can be of better service to you.
- Opportunity to get to know the parishioners better.

---

I don't have time to talk right now.

- Would there be another time I could stop by that would be more convenient?

---

I am no longer a practicing Catholic.

- I am sorry to hear that. Is there anything we could do that might make you reconsider coming back to the Church?
- Do you mind if I ask why you left the Church?

---

I wouldn't have anything to do with that parish after what happened to me.

- Apologize on behalf of the Church.
- Share the insight that the Church is bigger than one individual, perhaps if you got to know the community now.

---

I no longer see a great need for organized religion in my life.

- Respect the person's feelings
- Humbly share the difference that God and Church has made in your life.

---

I just registered a year ago.

- Computerized, make it as easy as possible by putting them all on the same form.

Or: They have all that information at the rectory

---

I am divorced now, I don't feel welcomed in the Church.

- The Church still welcomes you to Mass and the Sacraments, and to be involved in activities.
  - Talk to someone about it.
  - Efforts of the Church to minister to the divorced.
- 

Church is too big, no one cares, too institutionalized.

- Institution is indeed one side of it, but I represent the Community side.
- 

I left the Church and became a member of another denomination.

- Do you mind if I ask why you left the Church?
  - What attracted you to the church you now belong to?
  - Have you ever considered returning to the Catholic Church? Feel free to return any time.
- 

Why are you asking me so many questions? This is personal.

- We don't want you to answer anything you are uncomfortable with.
  - We are trying to match up needs with talents.
  - This is a standardized form from the computer. Perhaps it seems like a lot.
-

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CATHOLICS NOT REGISTERED IN THE PARISH**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Since you are not registered at our parish, are you part of any other Catholic community?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you interested in registering at our parish?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes (encourage them to call the rectory; give them the goldenrod brochure.)

\_\_\_\_\_ no

\_\_\_\_\_ not at this time

3. Is there anything our parish could do to assist you in deepening or rediscovering your faith? (Small Groups, Back to Basics, etc.)

4. Our parish strives to be a community of prayer. Do you have any needs that you would like us to pray for?

5. Would you be interested in being on a mailing list of events that are going on at our parish? (If yes, be sure to have their full address.) \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

6. Additional comments:

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CATHOLICS REGISTERED IN THE PARISH**

All of the questions below are JUST SUGGESTIONS. They do not have to all be answered. Be flexible and do only what you and the others are comfortable with doing. QUESTIONS 1, 2 AND 3 WERE MAILED TO EACH FAMILY ALREADY.

1. Some areas that our parish should be addressing are...
  
2. Some ways that our parish could help people deepen their faith are...
  
3. If you were the pastor and could do any 1 thing at our parish, what would it be?
  
4. Our parish strives to be a community of prayer, do you have any needs that you would like us to pray for?
  
5. Are you involved at all at our parish? This is a list of some of the areas that you might consider. (Show talent sheet.)
  
6. (Optional) Do you have the opportunity to attend Mass on a regular basis? If not, is there anything we can do to encourage you to come more often?
  
7. Additional comments:
  
8. Ask if you can give their info to the parish.

**PRAYER PETITION SHEET**

Our parish strives to be a community of prayer. Do you have any needs that you would like us to pray for? (You may also pray with them at that time.)

**SAMPLE LETTER FROM PASTOR**  
(to the parishioners in the area being visited)

Date

Dear Parishioner,

Each year I ask our Parish to take one section of the Parish to visit. This year it will be the homes in your neighborhood. This visitation will take place (Date). The purpose of the visitation is to update the Parish census and hear any concerns and suggestions that you might have. Enclosed is a sheet that has some questions. Please look over and then share your responses with the Home Visitor.

The Visitation Team goes to every home in the area, registered and non-registered. Their purpose is not to impose themselves on anyone but to answer questions, and provide information if desired.

When the representatives from our Parish come to your door, please welcome them. Visiting door-to-door is not an easy task and your kindness can brighten their day. They go out in the name of Christ and the Parish. Enclosed is a prayer card that I invite you to say daily until July 29<sup>th</sup>. We must never underestimate the power of the Spirit, and these personal visits may touch the hearts of some to rediscover God in their lives. If you have any concerns, feel free to call me at the rectory at 274-3809.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Pastor

**SAMPLE PRAYER/INVITATION CARD**

**No one likes being alone.**

It's great to belong  
to a group that says  
"All life everywhere is  
Wonderful  
Sacred  
To be protected and developed"

You are loved by God  
and us.

God is present in His Word  
and in the Eucharist.  
Live life better and help others live it.

Come join us at  
St. Edwards Church.

The greatest step you'll ever take.

For more information call 274-3809.

**SAMPLE LETTERS/NOTES TO LEAVE AT THE DOOR OF PEOPLE NOT AT HOME**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

In response to the growing needs, challenges and demands of our modern world, we wish to offer you the world of faith, compassion, and love of the family of St. Edward's Catholic Community.

Would you like to know and experience God's love, His touch and His refreshing spiritual blessings?

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“Together we can do something beautiful for you and for the world.” Mother Theresa

We ask God's blessings on you and may He refresh your spirit and sustain you in all that you do.

Come join us:

St. Edward's Parish  
1216 N. 6<sup>th</sup> St.  
Chillicothe, IL 61523  
(309) 274-3809

*Parish Home Visitation Program – Catholic Diocese of Peoria*

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**SAMPLE CENSUS FORM**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ LIVED IN PARISH: \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS VISITOR \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NO: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ APT # \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	CHURCH BAPTIZED	OCCUPATION/ SCHOOL	RECEIVED		ATTENDS MASS	RECEIVES COMM	HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION
				F.C.	CONF.			
HUSBAND OR MR.								
WIFE OR MISS								
WIFE'S MAIDEN NAME								

CHILDREN (LIVING AT HOME, AWAY AT SCHOOL, OR IN SERVICE)

FIRST NAME (full name if different)	DATE OF BIRTH	CHURCH BAPTIZED	OCCUPATION/ SCHOOL/GR.	ATTENDS REL. ED.	RECEIVED		ATTENDS MASS	RECEIVES COMMUNION
					F.C.	CONF.		

MARITAL STATUS:  MARRIED  WIDOWED  SEPARATED  DIVORCED  SINGLE

NAME OF CHURCH WHERE MARRIED: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

MARRIED BY:  CATHOLIC PRIEST  OTHER \_\_\_\_\_  IF "OTHER" – PERFORMED WITH PERMISSION?  YES  NO

OTHERS LIVING WITH YOU:

FULL NAME	RELATIONSHIP	DATE OF BIRTH	CHURCH BAPTIZED	OCCUPATION/ SCHOOL/GR.	RECEIVED		ATTENDS MASS	RECEIVES COMMUNION	MARITAL STATUS
					F.C.	CONF.			

HOW CAN THE PARISH MORE EFFECTIVELY SERVE YOUR FAMILY'S NEEDS? \_\_\_\_\_

FOLLOW UP?:  YES  NO WHY? \_\_\_\_\_

Updated card (already reg.) \_\_\_\_\_ new card \_\_\_\_\_ wish to be reg? \_\_\_\_\_

Who did you speak to in filling out form? \_\_\_\_\_



**EVALUATION FORM FOR PARISH HOME VISTATION TEAMS**

Please return by:

1. How prepared did you feel in doing the census?

\_\_\_\_\_very prepared    \_\_\_\_\_adequately prepared    \_\_\_\_\_not prepared

Please explain your answer.

2. Did you feel that you had sufficient time to do the visits assigned to you?

3. Were you satisfied with the number of houses you were asked to do?

4. Did you pray with your partner first?

5. What do you feel are some of the positive factors of this Home Visitation Project?

7. Would you be interested in helping out again?

\_\_\_\_\_yes    \_\_\_\_\_unsure at this time    \_\_\_\_\_no

8. Additional comments:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_