

DIOCESE OF LANSING

GROW + GO

DOOR-TO-DOOR MINISTRY TRAINING



Purpose

- Introduce people to Jesus and his Church
- Encourage people to be closer to Christ
- Invite people to your parish
- Pray with and for others

Overview

- The ministry team decides on areas to be visited.
- Visit only residences, not businesses.
- Go out in teams. The team leader does all the talking at a home so as not to overwhelm the person you are visiting. The other team member/s listen and pray silently.
- Use a script and keep it short.
- Take notes along the way to track your visits – write down whether the homeowner answered the door, various comments, and whether the home should be revisited/why.
- Use a map to track your progress through a neighborhood.

Prayer

- Pray together as a team before you begin. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your evangelizing efforts and give you the words that need to be said.
- Pray between visits for those you have met and those you will meet next.
- Pray when you finish.

General Guidelines for Door-to-Door Evangelization

When meeting non-Catholics:

- Introduce yourself as a neighbor from [name your parish]
- Smile, maintain eye contact, and be engaging!
- Ask if the resident is active in a church. If yes, ask them to pray for Christian unity.
- Ask if they have any questions about the Catholic faith or about your parish. If you don't know the answer to a question, offer to find out and get back to the person.
- Ask if there's anything you can pray for. If yes, write down their intention.
- Ask if you may leave a prayer card with them. Note: Don't just hand the person a prayer card without asking first.

When meeting Catholics:

- Ask if they belong to a parish.
- If they indicate they were Catholic but no longer go to church, ask how long it's been since they attended Mass. Let them know they're welcome back anytime. Be empathetic to those who may express negativity toward the Church. Many people have been hurt and have issues they need to resolve before they feel comfortable returning to the practice of the faith.
- Ask if they have any questions about your parish or about the Church.
- Ask if there's anything you can pray for. If yes, write down their intention.
- If appropriate, ask if you can pray spontaneously with them.
- Ask if you can leave a parish bulletin or flyer, or a prayer card.
- Ask if they would be open to giving you an email address or phone number to be connected with the parish.

Questions you might get when going door-to-door

Be prepared with short answers for questions you might get when calling on people:

- Why do Catholics call their priests "Father"?
- What must you do to be saved?
- Why do Catholics pray to statues?
- Why do you pray to or worship Mary? To the Saints?
- Why do you confess sins to a priest instead of directly to God?
- Why can't women be priests?
- What about the priest scandals?
- Why can't Catholics use birth control?
- What is purgatory?
- What happens after death?
- Is hell real?
- The Catholic Church judges people for their sexuality. Why is that?
- Do you have to accept everything the Church teaches?
- Why does the Church oppose gay marriage?

Also, be prepared for expressions of anger from some people. Think about how you would address these issues:

- Divorce and annulment
- Anger toward the Church, priests
- Religious liberty/government mandates on health care
- Abortion and pregnancy out-of-wedlock
- Tax exempt status of churches

Door-to-Door Ministry Dos and Don'ts

Do: Ring the doorbell, then step back onto the walkway to wait for someone to answer. If no one answers, you can knock twice to be sure you were heard. If no one answers, leave the door hanger prayer card and move on!

Don't: *Look into windows or doors, ring the doorbell repeatedly, or knock more than once.*

Do: Approach each home respectfully, use sidewalks and walkways, and remember you're likely interrupting people with your visit.

Don't: *Walk across anyone's yard or ignore "keep out" or "beware of dog" signs.*

Do: Wave and smile at any children in the yard, then go straight to the front door, ring the bell and wait on the walkway for an adult to answer. Speak only to the adults at the home.

Don't: *Speak to children directly, attempt to engage them in conversation, or ask if their parents are at home.*

Do: Thank the homeowner for answering the door! Say something like, "I hope you won't mind if I interrupt you for a moment. I'm (first and last name) from (parish name) and I'm going through the neighborhood taking prayer requests. Is there some way we can pray for you or your loved ones?" Write down the answer and say you'll remember their intention at a special prayer service, and invite them to attend. Then hand them the door hanger with the prayer and information about your church.

Don't: *Take too long to get to the point of why you're there, and leave promptly and courteously if the homeowner is not interested in speaking to you.*

Do: Choose a good time to go door-to-door, such as a Saturday morning.

Don't: *Go door-to-door after the dinner hour.*

Do: Go canvassing in pairs so that one evangelist can pray silently while the other talks to the homeowner.

Don't: *Leave a door hanger on any part of the property if the homeowner has declined to take one, and don't put one in a mailbox as that's illegal!*