



G U I D E L I N E S

# Evangelism

Share the Good News





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**Share the Good News**

Heather Lear

Discipleship Ministries

## EVANGELISM

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# Blessed to Be a Blessing

If you are reading this Guideline, you have said yes to servant leadership in your church. You are blessed to be a blessing. What does that mean?

By virtue of our baptism by water and the Spirit, God calls all Christians to faithful discipleship, to grow to maturity in faith (see Ephesians 4). The United Methodist Church expresses that call in our shared mission “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, or the *Discipline*, ¶120). Each local congregation and community of faith lives out that call in response to its own context—the wonderful and unique combination of God-given human and material resources with the needs of the community, within and beyond the congregation.

The work of servant leaders—your work—is to open a way for God to work through you and the resources available to you in a particular ministry area, for you are about God’s work. As stewards of the mysteries of God (see 1 Corinthians 4:1), servant leaders are entrusted with the precious and vital task of managing and using God’s gifts in the ongoing work of transformation.

In The United Methodist Church, we envision transformation occurring through a cycle of discipleship (see the *Discipline*, ¶122). With God’s help and guidance, we

- reach out and receive people into the body of Christ,
- help people relate to Christ through their unique gifts and circumstances,
- nurture and strengthen people in their relationships with God and with others,
- send transformed people out into the world to lead transformed and transforming lives,
- continue to reach out, relate, nurture, and send disciples . . .

Every ministry area and group, from finance to missions, engages in all aspects of this cycle. This Guideline will help you see how that is true for the ministry area or group you now lead. When you begin to consider all of the work you do as ministry to fulfill God’s mission through your congregation, each task, report, and conversation becomes a step toward transforming the world into the kingdom of God.

Invite Christ into the process to guide your ministry. You are doing powerful and wonderful work. Allow missteps to become learning opportunities; rejoice in success. Fill your work with the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

God blesses you with gifts, skills, and experience. You are a blessing when you allow God to work through you to make disciples and transform the world. Thank you.

(Find additional help in the “Resources” section at the end of this Guideline, in *The Book of Discipline*, and through <http://www.umc.org>.)

# Offer H.O.P.E.

One of the key ways we develop new leaders is through the core process for carrying out our mission, as stated in ¶122 of *The Book of Discipline*:

We make disciples as we:

- proclaim the gospel, seek, welcome and gather persons into the body of Christ;
- lead persons to commit their lives to God through baptism by water and the spirit and profession of faith in Jesus Christ;
- nurture persons in Christian living through worship, the sacraments, spiritual disciplines, and other means of grace, such as Wesley’s Christian conferencing;
- send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, freeing the oppressed, being and becoming a compassionate, caring presence, and working to develop social structures that are consistent with the gospel; and
- continue the mission of seeking, welcoming and gathering persons into the community of the body of Christ.

To better remember and understand the core process as written in ¶122, think in terms of **H.O.P.E.**—**H**ospitality, **O**ffer Christ, **P**urpose, and **E**ngagement. Through these discipleship paths of H.O.P.E., new disciples are made and sent out to reach even more people to bring into the body of Christ. We go into the world through outreach and mission, offering hope through proclamation of the gospel, seeking, welcoming, and gathering, as we offer hospitality to those not yet in the body. We offer Christ by providing opportunities for people to commit their lives to God through baptism by water and Spirit and profession of faith. We nurture people in Christian living to help them find a true sense of purpose in life, learning what it means to live out their belief through acts of piety and acts of mercy, Christian conferencing, regular participation in the sacrament of Holy Communion, and other means of grace. Through engagement, we send out these grace-filled followers of Jesus Christ who are putting their faith into action, helping to transform the surrounding community and offering hospitality in the name of Jesus Christ. Thus H.O.P.E. cycles back around.

Ask yourselves and the leadership of your congregation how your church might become a place of hope. Whether your church is small, medium, or large, it is essential to have an intentional discipleship system like H.O.P.E. in place. No matter which system you decide to use, the components of the core process should be established in every local church as we make disciples and develop leaders to accomplish the church’s mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. After all, it’s all about hope.

# For Such a Time as This

**T**hank you for saying yes to the call of leading your congregation in the area of evangelism! There is no aspect of the church that has more importance. Unfortunately, over the years evangelism has moved from a central focus in the church to being one of many programs. In some congregations, it is simply seen as the job of the pastor.

The good news is that neither you nor your committee carries the sole responsibility for making new disciples. This is the entire church's privilege and task. You and your team are more like a catalyst than a committee. Think of your ministry as inspiring, promoting, and encouraging the ministry of evangelism throughout the entire life of the church. As a leader, your role is to help shape a congregation that will reach out, welcome, and invite others to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and then help to equip and empower them to live as Christian disciples.

In this context, the importance of your role as the chair of evangelism cannot be overstated. Perhaps the words Mordecai spoke to Queen Esther capture the sentiment best, "Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14b NIV)

## The Aim and Definition of Evangelism

Before you begin the process of setting goals and measures for evangelism ministry, you need to have a clear idea of what evangelism is and its ultimate aim. The rest of this section provides a definition of *evangelism*. The aim of the ministry of evangelism, simply stated, is to relate people to God so that they will begin a relationship with Jesus Christ. And yet, evangelism does not end with a person's decision to begin a relationship with Jesus Christ. Effective evangelism leads new Christians into a process of ongoing discipleship and spiritual formation. Ultimately, disciples become actively involved with helping to make other disciples. Evangelism without connection to disciple formation often results in church members who quickly become inactive. With this aim in mind, let us focus on what *evangelism* is.

## Tell Good News

*Evangelism* has become a problematic term for some in the 21st century. Unfortunately, scare tactics, coercion, and "bad news that has an escape clause" have become synonymous with *evangelism* in some people's minds. In reading the gospels (the word *gospel* means "good news"), though, we do not see any of these approaches used by Jesus. Evangelism is good news. It is also not a program about membership recruitment or increasing budgets. Evangelism is the good news of God's healing and saving love in Jesus Christ.

What was the good news that Jesus shared? The first proclamation of the good news is found in Luke's Gospel, where Jesus recites a lesson from Isaiah 61:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me.  
He has sent me to preach good news to the poor,  
to proclaim release to the prisoners  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to liberate the oppressed,  
and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.  
(Luke 4:18-19)

The “year of the Lord's favor,” also called *Jubilee*, represents a time of complete forgiveness of past burdens and a fresh start. This passage underscores care and concern for the poor and marginalized people in society. The good news promises relief and release.

## Repentance

The early church emphasized two key elements of the good news: (1) repentance (turning away from evil and turning to good—through salvation in Jesus Christ) and (2) the announcement of the kingdom of God (God's reign on the earth).

### *Action Step:*

Discuss the following with your pastor, leaders, and congregation:

- How do we talk to people about repentance?
- The invitation to repent or turn away from evil is still relevant today. Just as in addiction recovery programs, admitting that one is, or has been, participating in evil is the first step toward healing. How do we teach people to resist evil and live better lives?
- What testimony of repentance can we share individually with others from our personal walk with Jesus Christ?
- Read the following Scripture passages. List several characteristics of Christian behavior found in them. These passages help us realize the need to repent and embrace a God-directed life. Discuss ways in which your congregation teaches and demonstrates these characteristics.
  - Galatians 5:22-23 (the fruit of the Spirit)
  - Matthew 5 (the Beatitudes)
  - 1 Corinthians 13 (the love chapter)

## The Kingdom (Reign) of God

How do you talk to people about the reign of God? The announcement of the kingdom of God is another key point of the good news. Many churches and traditions emphasize conversion—“in order to get into heaven after one dies”—as the point of Christian faith.



By contrast, Jesus Christ's foundational message is, "Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!" (Matthew 4:17). His emphasis is on conversion that leads to radical change in behavior, thought, and action. These changes indicate that a person chooses to live daily as a new citizen in God's reign (kingdom).

There is a marked difference between the two approaches. Salvation with heaven as the only goal has a distant, future orientation. To emphasize a single future benefit can leave new Christians wondering what should be happening to and through them in the present. By contrast, salvation that invites us to be participants in God's kingdom and reign has an active, present orientation. The focus is on how to live in this new reality, right now.

Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, he compelled and expected his disciples to reach out to others. He expected his disciples to partner with God to expand the reign of God. Each of the Gospel writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—describes how Jesus sent out his disciples to make other disciples. The best-known example is the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20:

Jesus came near and spoke to them, "I've received all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age."

Obedying the Great Commission is not one option among many for a congregation; it is at the very heart of the Christian enterprise. Christianity is a missionary, evangelizing faith.

## **From Membership to Discipleship**

For decades, we have emphasized and put countless dollars and energy into attracting people to our churches. We have equated church membership with discipleship. While we believe that the local church is the best vessel for discipleship, having people join our churches is not our ultimate goal. Growing congregations receive new people on profession of their faith, not just transfers from other churches.

As our denominational mission states, the reason we work to help make disciples is to bring about the transformation of the world. Effective congregations develop a disciple-making system that welcomes and invites, equips, and sends disciples forth in ministry.

# Your Ministry of Evangelism

**A**s a leader of the evangelism ministry of your church, you have various responsibilities. Each task serves to deepen the congregation's commitment to its mission.

1. Promote evangelism as a core value of each ministry of the church.
2. Envision what God's will for the congregation's evangelism ministry is and set goals that are consistent with that vision.
3. Develop a plan for an overall evangelism strategy and system that reaches out to people, welcomes them into the congregation, relates them to God, and equips and empowers them for ministry.
4. Serve as team leader for those assigned to work with you: guiding the work of the team, helping them to work from a biblical and theological foundation, creating work space in which Christian faith formation happens, planning agendas, presiding at meetings, and representing the ministry of evangelism in meetings of the church council and charge conference.
5. Work with the pastor, team, and other church leaders in assessing your congregation's goals and measures pertaining to evangelism (paying particular attention to professions of faith) and attendance trends, as well as the way in which new people are received into the congregation and empowered for ministry.
6. Implement and evaluate your plan.

## Build the Evangelism Ministry Team

Evangelism is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit. Start building your team with prayer. The nominations and leadership development committee may help to identify team members, though you may need to recruit or add members to complete your team. Your pastor can assist with suggestions. At your first meeting, determine a time of day when team members will be in prayer for one another and for the development of a common vision for the congregation's evangelistic ministry.

Build a team of people committed to the ministry of evangelism. Depending on the size of the congregation and the group structure that may already be in place, the team may vary in number. Aim for a group of no fewer than five and no more than a dozen. Your team should represent a cross section of the congregation. If your church does not currently have an evangelism team, you might want to include as members the lay leader, lay servants (speakers) in the congregation, at least one youth, and one young adult.

Agree on a schedule and a reading list, including this Guideline. Work through the suggested Action Steps that follow with your pastor, the team, and—as much as possible—with other key church leaders and members of the congregation.

As team leader, it is important to familiarize yourself with biblical models of evangelism and faith sharing. It would be helpful to spend a few minutes at the beginning of each team meeting using one of these texts in centering and devotional time. Talk with your pastor about periodically beginning church council meetings or other administrative team meetings with one of these verses as well. Some of these texts include:

- Matthew 9:35–10:23 (call of the disciples)
- Luke 4:16-21 (Jesus’ sermon in the synagogue)
- Luke 8:26-39 (Jesus’ expulsion of unclean spirits)
- Luke 10:1-20 (mission of the seventy)
- Luke 10:25-37 (parable of the good Samaritan)
- Luke 15 (parables of the lost sheep, coin, and son)
- John 1:35-51 (call of Jesus’ first disciples)
- John 20:19-31 (post-resurrection appearance of Jesus)

As your team reads each passage, consider the following questions:

- How is evangelism practiced in this passage or story?
- What does the passage teach about evangelism?
- In what ways does our congregation practice evangelism as highlighted in this passage?
- In what ways could we improve our ministry of evangelism to align with this biblical witness?
- What personal stories of evangelism does this passage inspire or bring to mind?

## Holistic Evangelism

The practices and understanding of evangelism vary widely across the denomination. Some churches understand evangelism as sharing a set of beliefs and accepting tenets of the faith rationally—a “head” style of ministry. Some congregations view evangelism as growing in one’s personal relationship with Jesus—a “heart” style. Still other congregations believe evangelism is loving our neighbors in tangible ways—a “hands” style. Rarely do congregations employ and integrate all three.

### Action Step

What are the areas of strength and focus in your congregation? Does your congregation tend to focus more on the head, heart, or hands of faith? Which area could use some more attention?

While individuals may excel in one style over another, holistic evangelism systems involve the entire congregation and integrate all three aspects—head, heart, and hands—not only in what we do at church, but in our everyday lives. Most of us are quite proficient in the art of compartmentalization, and our religious life is one of the compartments. We talk about God at church. We serve God at church. We might read our Bibles or pray at home,

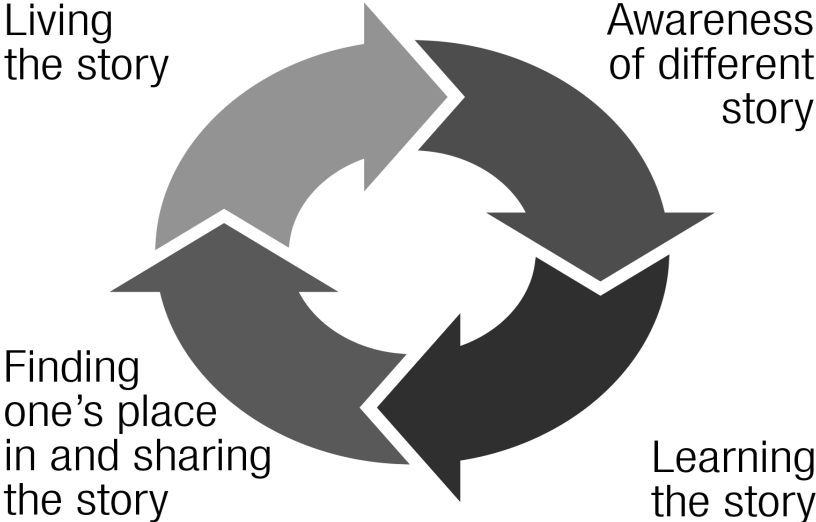
but we may not think about living out our faith in all of the other arenas where we invest time and energy. Yes, church is where we learn and are reminded of who we are and how we fit into God’s larger story; where we practice articulating our individual faith stories, and where others help us to discern our gifts and calling in God’s kingdom. But that cannot be where our practice of faith stops.

Our denominational mission statement is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We invite people into a lifetime of growing in love of God and neighbor, so that they may join in God’s world-transforming work. This work of transformation happens only when people know who they are, who God is, and how to live in loving relationships.

### **The Power of Story**

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we believe that there is a different and greater story that guides our life than the one offered to us by the world. God is actively working in the lives of people all around us, whether they realize it or not. Our task is to help them see God’s hand and understand that their lives have great purpose and meaning as their stories intersect with God’s story.

In today’s culture, we can’t just assume that people will know or hear God’s story by some other means. The church needs to reclaim its tradition of educating its people to be bearers of that story in their everyday lives. The graphic below illustrates the cycle of how one enters and grows in God’s story in order to live as Christ’s hands and feet in the world. This cycle never ends, as the more we grow in our faith and knowledge of God, the more we understand our need for and dependence on God.



## **Awareness of a Different Story**

Everyday we are bombarded by advertisements and messages telling us what gives a person value and worth. The American dream is about achieving and having more than previous generations, and consumerism tells us that we will be happy if we just have a little more. Yet God tells a different story; our level of education, job title, or social status does not determine our value to God. God loves us and begins working in our lives, offering to be in relationship with us, even before we realize it. We call this *prevenient grace*. It is God who awakens us to this different story, but as the church and Christians, we have the privilege of helping others to see God's hand and share God's alternative story.

## **Learning the Story**

Fifty years ago, churches could rely on the American culture to assist in faith formation and basic Christian teaching and principles. That assumption can no longer be made, and churches need to be intentional about teaching God's story to people of all ages. Christian education and formation is not only for children; nor is it completed at the age of confirmation. We are called to grow in love of God and neighbor throughout our lives.

Where do we learn and teach the story? Worship is where theology is taught through the singing of hymns, reciting ancient creeds and prayers, the reading and proclamation of the word, and celebrating the sacraments. We learn the story through participation in classes and small groups and through prayer and personal study of Scripture.

## **Finding One's Place in and Sharing the Story**

While it is important to grow in head knowledge of God and the tenets of the faith, we grow in our discipleship by practicing our faith in the context of community. We cannot expect our congregations to articulate, integrate, and practice their faith in their everyday lives if we have not created space for them to practice within the walls of the church. It is in the body of Christ where we discover our gifts for ministry and help one another see how God has worked and continues to work in our lives. Here are some ideas for helping people name and claim their individual and communal place in God's story in the context of worship:

- If you currently have a time for joys and concerns, consider using that time to ask a different question. "Where did you see God this week?" and "Where did you offer God's grace this week?"
- Instead of giving the what, where, and when details as an announcement, share a story of witness or impact regarding an upcoming ministry or event.
- Introduce the offering by telling a story of how the money enables ministry and transformed lives.
- Plan a time for people to share their witness in response to the message. Before the service, be sure you have a couple of people ready and prepared to share.
- Record videos of people telling their God-moment stories in advance of worship and show as either an introduction or response to the Word proclaimed.

## Living the Story

For decades, the entry point into the church for most people was worship. Then people would join a Sunday school class or other group, and eventually, they would participate in serving and leading. *Belief* preceded *belonging* and *behaving* like a disciple of Jesus. People would learn the story before living the story.

This paradigm has now shifted. Many people without a church home and many younger people enter the church through mission or fellowship opportunities. Young adults today are volunteering at record rates, and they care about creation and making the world a better place. They just have not been taught or shown that mercy and justice are also priorities of the kingdom of God. People are living the story before they are even aware that they have entered God's story and that the Holy Spirit is working in their lives. This is a significant shift, and congregations need to make adjustments and learn how to raise awareness of God's story for these individuals in these settings.

As an evangelism team, your task is to ensure that each person's story is heard, claimed, and shared and to find where those stories intersect with God's story.

## Our Individual Stories

Each of us has our own story of how God has worked and moved in our lives. People outside of Christianity want to know what difference Christ has made in our lives. The validity of our witness depends on the reality of our personal interaction with Jesus Christ and our personal transformation by the Holy Spirit. Many people in our congregations have never been asked to share their stories or even process what Jesus has done and meant for them individually. Does your congregation encourage people to discover and practice sharing their Christian journey with others?

### Action Step

There are at least three groups of Christians in the church: (1) Those who can trace the path of their Christian conversion (some can even name the exact moment of conversion), (2) those who cannot remember a time when they were not Christian, and (3) those who are still exploring and questioning their experience of God.

To help these groups articulate their faith journeys, host an event at which you invite the pastor, leaders, and congregation to answer the following questions. It's not necessary to divide the groups physically; have people choose the group questions they wish to answer.

#### ***Group 1—Those Able to Trace Their Path of Conversion***

1. What was your life like before meeting Jesus Christ?
2. How did you meet and accept Jesus Christ as Savior?
3. How would you describe your life since accepting Jesus Christ?

### ***Group 2—Those Who Cannot Remember Not Being Christian***

1. What was it like to grow up in a Christian environment?
2. When did you accept the Christian faith as your own? (Perhaps you were baptized as an infant or went through confirmation, but claimed Christianity as your personal faith later.)
3. How would you describe your life since affirming the Christian faith?

### ***Group 3—Those Whose Stories Are Still Evolving***

1. What drew (draws) you to participation in a Christian faith community?
2. What encourages you to continue your journey of faith in this Christian community?
3. What do you wish to learn about Christ and the life of faith?

Encourage members of each group to use the questions to create a faith journey timeline, to map out the peaks and valleys of their journeys, the places where they felt the presence of God, and the places where they struggled.

When the questions have been answered and the timelines completed, invite people to share their stories with the larger group. Encourage sharing from all three categories, and honor every story as it is told.

## **Your Congregation's Story**

Like individuals, congregations have a story that connects to God's story and bears witness to Jesus Christ. It is important for the congregation to be able to articulate the various ways it is bearing witness to the kingdom of God.

### **Action Step**

Invite the congregation to rehearse its history in ministry since its inception (coordinate this activity with the church historian). If your church has a long history, consider beginning your timeline at the earliest memory of one of your leaders

Gather a roll of butcher paper or tape newsprint together end-to-end to create a work surface. Draw a timeline on the paper beginning with the birth of the church leading to the present. Ask the pastor, leaders, and members of the congregation to place on the timeline key ministries, activities, and events through which the church has been sharing its Christian witness with the community. Use different color sticky notes or markers to chart when people came to the church, when their children were baptized and confirmed, and formational events in their journey as part of the congregation.

After completing the timeline, discuss the story the timeline tells about your church and the noticeable trends that emerge. Are most of the events in recent history or did a majority of the highlights occur some time ago? Are there common trends of positive responses from which to build?

## Your Community's Story

In 2008, General Conference added the phrase “for the transformation of the world” to our denominational mission statement—“to make disciples of Jesus Christ”—for a reason. The purpose of making disciples is for the kingdom of earth to look more like the kingdom of heaven. Yet for decades, congregations have waited for their neighbors to come to them. We have viewed increased church attendance as the ends and the goal, instead a means to the end. Along with opening the doors *in* to our churches, the doors need to be opened *out* to the world beyond the walls of the building. The church is not the building. We—the body of Christ—are the church. God is already out there working, and God invites us out into our neighborhoods to join in that work. Ask

- What, through Christ, does your local congregation have to offer the people in the surrounding community?
- What is your relationship with the community (if any)?
- What assumptions do you hold about your neighbors and their needs? Have you invested the time to hear their stories?
- How does (or might) your congregation connect with people who have transitioned into the neighborhood?
- What are the major concerns of the people in the surrounding community? If you don't know, how will you find out?

## Action Steps

1. Obtain demographic data about your community. Your conference office may have contracted services with a demographic information company such as MissionInsite. If so, you can obtain a wide array of demographic data about your immediate community through such a service. If your conference office doesn't have such data, you may contact Discipleship Ministries directly, which can supply this information (see the “Resources” section for details). From these findings, you will be able to determine the numbers, age groupings, education levels, interest in church, hopes and dreams, and more, of the people in your community. How do the strengths of your church match with the people and needs in your community?
2. Identify the members considered inactive or marginal. Why are they inactive? Who has the responsibility to reach out to and perhaps reconcile with them on behalf of the church? The percentage of marginal members should be low if a viable discipleship system is in place and active in your local church. Coordinate this activity with the committee on nominations and leader development.



## Changing Communities and Diversity

Is the makeup of your congregation a reflection of your community? As congregations study the demographics of their communities, many look very different than they did 30–40 years ago. Whether there has been rapid growth, decline, or changes in the demographics of your community, the way you approach ministry and engagement should be informed by the way your community looks now. There is often a temptation to revisit and put a great deal of effort into trying to do things that worked really well in the past. Most likely, these efforts will lead to frustration and burnout when all the hard work yields little fruit. Make sure you actually talk to your neighbors. Build relationships with local educational and community leaders. Hear their vision and dreams. Spend some time talking to the people in the businesses and houses that are closest to your church. Does the community see itself reflected in your membership and ministry offerings? It is crucial not to make assumptions about who is beyond your walls. Vital congregations regularly plan ministry and outreach by doing their homework to see if their assumptions and perceptions of their neighbors are correct and if their targeted demographic will actually be blessed by their efforts.

## Assess Current Reality and Set Goals

Assess the strengths and weaknesses of your current ministry efforts. How does your church presently reach out to and welcome people into the life of the church? How effective are these activities? What are the results in both quantity (numbers) and quality (evidence of changed lives)? Goals can provide you with a process that helps you cultivate an evangelistic church culture. Here are some sample goals and measures for individuals, congregations, and pastors.

### Sample Evangelism Goals and Measures for Individuals

Goal	Quantitative Measure	Qualitative Measure
Increase Bible knowledge and growth in discipleship	Track participation in a read-through-the-Bible plan per year, Bible basics, or Christianity 101 course	Note the ways in which biblical knowledge influences your daily life; note the increased connections you make between your story and God's story
Actively invite non-members to attend a church function ___ number of times per month	Track the number of people invited and attendees	Note the ways in which relationships with visitors and neighbors are deepening; note the stories of others you have learned
Actively share your faith with others	Track the number of people to whom you witness and whose stories you have heard	Note the ways in which your story and the stories of others influence your walk of faith

Participate in community outreach and build relationships with people in your neighborhood	Track the number of times and places in which you volunteer in the community, participate in VIM or other mission outreach efforts	Note any ways in which the quality of life in the community is improving, in both physical need and harmony in relationships
Pray for opportunities to point to God's activity in non-Christians' lives and for their response to God's grace	Track the number of non-Christians you actively pray for; consider using a prayer journal	Note the deepening of your spiritual understanding and the responses of others to prayer
Bear Christian fruit (see Galatians 5:22-23)		Celebrate your increased practice of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness [generosity], faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control

### Sample Evangelism Goals and Measures for Congregations

Goal	Quantitative Measure	Qualitative Measure
Increase biblical literacy of people in the church	Track the number of people who participate per year in ongoing spiritual formation and Bible study	Note the ways in which biblical knowledge and connection are used in conversation and ministry settings
Increase the number of invitations members extend to others to attend a church function	Track the number of visitors who attend by invitation	Gather stories from members and visitors of deepening relationships and trust
Increase instruction in faith sharing and opportunities to practice sharing faith in community.	Track the number of people who participate in faith-sharing instruction and corporate time spent on testimony and sharing God stories.	Record faith stories and testimonies shared. With permission, these could be shared on your church website or social media page.
Increase participation in community outreach among members	Track the number of people who volunteer in the community, participate in VIM, or other mission outreach efforts.	Ask members who participate in outreach to share the ways it has changed or deepened their faith and understanding
Increase the number of members praying for the salvation of non-Christians	Track the number of people actively involved in intercessory prayer for non-Christians	Ask members engaged in intercessory prayer to share their experiences and the stories of lives touched

## Sample Evangelism Goals and Measures for Pastors

Goal	Quantitative Measure	Qualitative Measure
Preach at least one evangelistically focused sermon every ___ weeks.	Track the number of evangelistic sermons preached each quarter.	Ask members to share responses to the evangelism-themed sermons. Ask the pastor to share evidence seen of lives changed
Participate in at least one outreach experience in the community every ___ weeks and build relationships with community leaders.	Track the number of outreach experiences you participated in each quarter.	Report on evidence of deeper trust and cooperation with community leaders. Note your own deepening faith and understanding and its influence on your pastoral leadership
Assess all ministry areas with leaders to determine effectiveness in evangelism every ___ months.	Track the number of assessments completed within the specified time.	Track the responses produced at each assessment and adjust and revise ministries as needed.
Plan at least one outreach event per quarter with church leaders.	Track the number of outreach events conducted per quarter.	Invite leaders, participants and those served to share stories of the impact of outreach events

### Extend Hospitality

Local churches are a place where we can reconnect to God and one another. Community and fellowship are essential to our discipleship, but we always need to be ready to welcome others into the community we so deeply value. Biblical hospitality is about welcoming the stranger. We love and welcome others because we have been loved and welcomed by God.

Friendliness is an expressed value and trait of most congregations. Hospitality calls us to enter into relationship and concern about another more deeply than surface friendliness. Important questions to ask your congregation are: Are we friendly, or are we in the practice of making friends? Are all people really welcome? Are there groups of people who would not be welcomed in our church?

As you think about what a new person might experience when he or she walks through the doors of your church, consider having your committee and/or church leadership team complete a hospitality assessment (see “Evangelism01-Hospitality Assessment.pdf,” available at [www.UMOfficialResources.com/Guidelines](http://www.UMOfficialResources.com/Guidelines) or [www.MinistryGuidelines.org](http://www.MinistryGuidelines.org)).

# Make Membership More Meaningful

Studies of congregational life reveal that as many as one-half of those who join churches become inactive in their first year of membership. Find ways to incorporate new members into the life of the church at a pace and level that suits their needs, interests, and gifts. Visitors should be welcomed as guests. Members need to feel like family. Remember, however, that our mission is to make disciples, not members.

When new members are graciously and intentionally incorporated they:

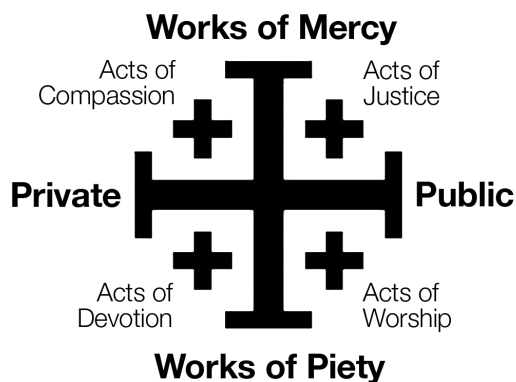
- continue to grow spiritually through small groups;
- have at least seven personal friends in the congregation;
- identify gifts and callings and exercise them;
- understand, identify with, and support the mission and vision of the congregation;
- are excited about the congregation and naturally invite friends, family members, and neighbors to become disciples of Christ.

To assist in this process, assign sponsors or fellowship friends to each new member, person, or family. These “shepherds” help introduce newcomers to other members of the congregation and Sunday school class leaders and invite them to fellowship events.

# Nurture and Equip People for Christian Discipleship

John Wesley, founder of Methodism, embodied a discipleship plan that integrated invitation, formation, and service to and with the community. He brought the message of God's saving grace to the people wherever they gathered (in fields and street corners, coffee houses and pubs). Those who responded with renewed faith were invited to join a class meeting, where they trained and practiced giving witness to their faith, were held accountable for growing in discipleship, and were taught to practice the means of grace. Wesley emphasized the importance of balancing personal holiness and social holiness, so that the transformation experienced in people's heads and hands was also lived out in their everyday lives.

The diagram below illustrates a holistic approach to discipleship that incorporates both public and private works of mercy and works of piety.



## Action Step

Spend some time evaluating your church calendar and the ministry opportunities offered in your church. Make a list of all of the ways people in your church practice acts of compassion, acts of justice, acts of devotion, and acts of worship. Which quadrant of the above diagram is strongest? Which quadrant could use more attention?

# Some Final Words of Encouragement

**R**emember, evangelism isn't a church program, and it isn't solely the job of your ministry team and church staff. You have the privilege of creating an evangelistic culture in your congregation; a culture that

- reaches out and practices hospitality;
- offers people the opportunity to adopt another story, God's story, for their lives in and through Jesus Christ;
- nurtures people—through community—to learn God's story in order to find greater purpose for their lives;
- engages the world beyond the walls of the church building.

There is not a single ministry area or administrative team in your congregation that should not be partnering with you in this work: How we use our buildings matters. How we build our budget matters. How we run our children's ministry matters.

What happens within the walls of the church and getting people to come to our programs is not the goal. God has gifted the church with the Holy Spirit to be a vessel in the world, and all of our effort and ministries should consider those who are not yet there and how we can connect people to God. Some might need a little nudging to reexamine their work and focus, and others might need a little help seeing the overlap in ministry after years of compartmentalization. With God's help, a cohesive, renewed focus will enable you to embody our mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world"!

# Resources

\*\* Indicates our top picks

## Web Resources

Connections: Reimagining Evangelism, <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/connections-reimagining-evangelism>

\*\*Discipleship Ministries Evangelism website: <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/evangelism>. See also evangelism webinars, <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/webinars>

Evangelism Connections: <http://www.evangelismconnections.org>. Ecumenical partnership of mainline denominations that strives to frame and provide resources for evangelism, hospitality, and church vitality in a 21st-century context.

Foundation for Evangelism: <http://foundationforevangelism.org>

MissionInsite (Ministry Demographics service): <http://missioninsite.com>. Most annual conferences have a subscription to this service and can get you information on your surrounding community.

National Association of United Methodist Evangelists: [www.naume.org](http://www.naume.org)

UMC Evangelism Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/UMCEvangelism>

\*\* United Methodist Communications website: [www.umcom.org](http://www.umcom.org). See especially Knowledge Center > Welcoming; Support Center > Church Communications Training > United Methodist Basics; and Rethink Church

Upper Room Ministries, [www.upperroom.org](http://www.upperroom.org)

- Chrysalis: <http://chrysalis.upperroom.org> for young adults and teens
- Walk to Emmaus: <http://emmaus.upperroom.org/>
- The Academy for Spiritual Formation, <http://academy.upperroom.org/>

\*\*The Vital Congregations website: [www.umvitalcongregations.org](http://www.umvitalcongregations.org)

## Books

*Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* by Bryan Stone (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), ISBN: 9781587431944.

*Is There a Future for God's Love? An Evangelical Theology* by Henry H. Knight (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012), ISBN: 9780687660339).

\*\**Kingdom Come* by Reggie McNeal (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale Momentum, 2015), ISBN: 9781414391878.

*Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There* by Leonard Sweet (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), ISBN: 9781434764744.

*The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* by Reggie McNeal (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2009), ISBN: 9780470453155.

\*\**Transforming Evangelism* by Henry H. Knight III and F. Douglas Powe Jr. (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2006), ISBN: 9780881774856.

\*\**Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism*, second edition, by Martha Grace Reese (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008), ISBN: 9780827238084.

\*\**Your Church Can Thrive: Making the Connections That Build Healthy Congregations* by Harold Percy (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), ISBN: 9780687022564.

## **Hospitality/Welcoming Resources**

\*\**Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* by Christine D. Pohl (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), ISBN: 9780802844316.

\*\**The Race to Reach Out* by Douglas T. Anderson and Michael J. Coyner (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), ISBN: 9780687066681.

*Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers*, by Elizabeth Newman (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007), ISBN: 9781587431760.

## **Faith Sharing**

*DISCIPLE Bible Study*, available in four phases. Contact: Cokesbury Seminars, 800-251-8591. [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com); then Search DISCIPLE.

*The Faith-Sharing Congregation* by Roger K. Swanson and Shirley F. Clement (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1996), ISBN: 9780881771534.

*The Faith-Sharing New Testament and Psalms* (Nashville: Cokesbury, in cooperation with Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2007), ISBN: 9780687642793.

\*\**Holy Conversation: Talking About God in Everyday Life* by Richard Peace (Downers Grove: IVP Connect, 2006), ISBN: 9780830811199.

*Witness* by Ronald K. Crandall (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2007), ISBN: 9780881774931).

For additional resources, check with your annual conference office.

## **Multicultural Evangelism**

\*\**Many Faces, One Church* by Ernest S. Lyght, Glory Dharmaraj, Jacob Dharmaraj (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), ISBN: 9780687494453.

\*\**The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South*, by Philip Jenkins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), ISBN: 9780195368512.

*New Wine, New Wineskins: How African American Congregations Can Reach New Generations* by F. Douglas Powe (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012), ISBN: 9781426742224.



**\*\****The Next Christendom* by Philip Jenkins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), ISBN: 9780199767465.

*Whose Religion Is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West* by Lamin Sanneh (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), ISBN: 9780802821645.

## **Spanish Language Evangelism Resources**

Resources for the National Hispanic Plan are online through the General Board of Global Ministries, <http://nphlm.org>

**\*\****Módulo III: Elementos esenciales en la facilitación en la educación Christiana*, by Ada Chong, Lucrecia Cotto, Hildelisa Ordaz, Marigene Chamberlain, Saúl Trinidad, y Alma Perez (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2006), ISBN: 9780881774535.

## **UMC Agencies & Helpful Links**

General Board of Church and Society, [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org), 202-488-5600; Service Center, 1-800-967-0880

General Board of Discipleship (d/b/a Discipleship Ministries), [www.umcdiscipleship.org](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org), 877-899-2780; Discipleship Resources, <http://bookstore.upperroom.org>, 1-800-972-0433; The Upper Room, [www.upperroom.org](http://www.upperroom.org), 1-800-972-0433; email: [info@umcdiscipleship.org](mailto:info@umcdiscipleship.org).

General Board of Global Ministries, [www.umcmmission.org](http://www.umcmmission.org), 1-800-862-4246 or 212-870-3600; email: [info@umcmmission.org](mailto:info@umcmmission.org)

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, [www.gbhem.org](http://www.gbhem.org), 615-340-7400

General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, [www.gbophb.org](http://www.gbophb.org), 847-869-4550

General Commission on Archives and History, [www.gcah.org](http://www.gcah.org), 973-408-3189

General Commission on Religion & Race, [www.gcorr.org](http://www.gcorr.org), 202-547-2271; email: [info@gcorr.org](mailto:info@gcorr.org)

General Commission on the Status & Role of Women, [www.gcsr.org](http://www.gcsr.org), 1-800-523-8390

General Commission on United Methodist Men, [www.gcummm.org](http://www.gcummm.org), 615-340-7145

General Council on Finance and Administration, [www.gcfa.org](http://www.gcfa.org), 866-367-4232 or 615-329-3393

Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting (General Commission on United Methodist Men), [www.gcummm.org](http://www.gcummm.org), 615-340-7145

The United Methodist Publishing House, [www.umph.org](http://www.umph.org), 615-749-6000; Curric-U-Phone, 1-800-251-8591; Cokesbury, [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com), 1-800-672-1789

United Methodist Communications, [www.umcom.org](http://www.umcom.org), 615-742-5400; EcuFilm, 1-888-346-3862; InfoServ, email: [infoserv@umcom.org](mailto:infoserv@umcom.org); *Interpreter Magazine*, [www.interpretermagazine.org](http://www.interpretermagazine.org), 615-742-5441

United Methodist Women, [www.unitedmethodistwomen.org](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org); 212-870-3900

**For additional resources, contact your annual conference office.**