



LIGHT THE FIRE

Resource Guide



SAINT PAUL
STREET EVANGELIZATION

Friends in Christ,

Street ministry is one of those great opportunities for the Church to cast her nets into the deep to bring souls to faith in Jesus Christ. Working on the streets is a joy in that while we often sow seeds that we will never personally see come to fruition, we have the opportunity to help plant a great harvest for the kingdom of God.

Take this testimony of one person we encountered: “God put you here for me today. I just got finished cussing out God and I know you are here because of what I did. I was about to commit suicide - everything in my life turned upside down on me - and I feel life is not worth living anymore.”

When we do street ministry we know that each person that walks by has a story, and many of those people are wounded, broken and in pain. Jesus frees us from the chaos and slavery of sin to live in peace, knowing the mercy of God. The Church, as the “sacrament of salvation,” has discerned the need to launch a New Evangelization, call Catholics back to the Sacraments, and reach out to non-Catholics to help them encounter Christ more fully. Our team took the time to speak to, pray with, and help the person above who was contemplating suicide above, and his life was changed by encountering our evangelists.

In a time marked with unbelief and the rejection of God, our Light the Fire evangelization night has brought about great fruit. At the last event we hosted in Detroit, Michigan over 300 people came into Old St. Mary to pray and receive ministry. Even if a quarter of that number had come in to just pray, it would have been well worth it.

Light the Fire is a low cost event in terms of time and expense. You need a key volunteer or staff member to head up the event, and several volunteers to assist. These volunteers can expect their training to last about an hour, with the event lasting 2-3 hours. The parish should be prepared to cover the expense of having the church open, lighting tea candles, providing a simple meal for the volunteers, and purchasing needed training and event materials.

As you discern together whether or not to hold a Light the Fire event at your parish, keep in mind our staff is here to answer questions and help guide you.

The world is dying and in need of a Savior. The laborers are few, and our experience has shown the harvest is plentiful. We look forward to meeting you in the field.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Steve Dawson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

Steve Dawson
President

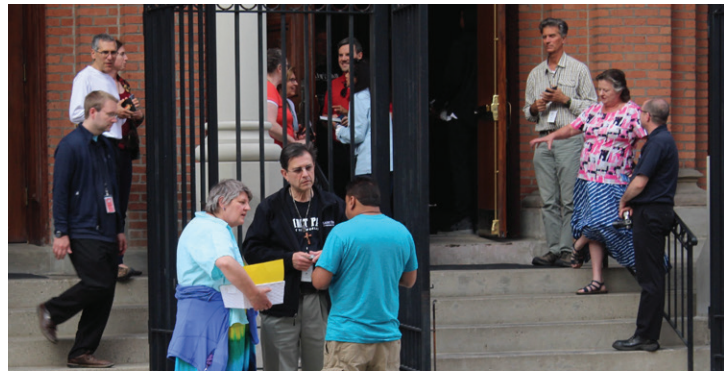
What is Light the Fire?

Light the Fire is an event where volunteer evangelists invite people to come into a Catholic church for an encounter with Jesus. The church is open to the public, and guests find beautiful instrumental music playing while the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in a monstrance on the altar. Other volunteers stand ready to welcome them, pray with them, and share the Gospel. Most people in our post-Christian culture rarely set foot in a church, and fewer still have opportunities to interact with intentional disciples who are ready to talk to them about faith in Jesus. The purpose of Light the Fire is to engage people as they are and where they are at, and to offer them an opportunity to encounter Christ within the church, in hopes that they might respond to God's grace and experience a powerful, transformative encounter with Jesus Christ, be it for the first time or a renewal in their faith.

Evangelists on the street open the conversation by inviting people to come into a church, light a candle and offer a prayer. Most people reject an invitation to come into the church and pray, encounter Jesus, sit in silence, or go to adoration. The invitation to light a candle is something simple and tangible, and as you will see from the testimonies on our website is just the first step many people needed to say "yes" to Jesus. Before they leave, they will have an opportunity to do more, and in the process be touched by the love and mercy of Jesus. Light the Fire can be an overwhelming experience and convert hearts. As volunteers respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, Light the Fire becomes a way to help people move out of a merely institutional understanding of Christianity by facilitating an intentional response to a personal invitation.



An evangelist holds a basket of candles and invites pedestrians to come in to the church



Street Evangelists and Greeters speak to guests outside the church

What makes Light the Fire successful?

There are a number of elements that are important to putting on a successful event. Consider the following keys to success.

Intercessory Prayer: The most important thing for the success of a Light the Fire event is prayer. Evangelization is spiritual warfare—we are battling to win souls for Jesus. All those involved must be covered in a mantle of prayer and protection. It is essential to have intercessors praying before, during, and after the event. It is critical to have volunteers praying. The more prayer and sacrifice, the more success.

Location: The location of the church is also very important. It needs to be in an area that has significant foot traffic. Some parishes are positioned in the business or entertainment districts of their communities or some other area that attracts a lot of people. These churches are prime candidates

for hosting Light the Fire. Other parishes that may not normally see much foot traffic may be great locations for Light the Fire during local events.

Timing: The time of year, the day of the week, and the hours of the day are often critical to a successful Light the Fire event. Note that Light the Fire does not have to occur at night. Some churches are in an area that may have a festival or farmer's market during the day.

When considering evening events, usually, the later it gets, the more negative encounters may occur with people under the influence of alcohol and other substances. Obviously, this is to be avoided as much as possible. Planning an early evening event is recommended.

Duration: It is recommended to host the event for at least 2 hours. This gives ample opportunity for people to come through the church. Going for more than 3-4 hours can result in fatigue.

Weather: During Fall and Winter, don't let the cold deter you. Sometimes people will agree to come into the church because it is a warm place. In colder regions, a winter event is not a bad idea as long as conditions aren't dangerous. The Advent and Christmas seasons are great times for Light the Fire.

Other events: Consider hosting Light the Fire when the community is hosting other activities such as festivals, professional sports, concerts, holidays, and cultural events. One may be surprised at how open people are to God, even when coming from an event that seems contrary to the Christian faith.

Volunteers: Volunteers open to the work of the Holy Spirit are crucial to the success of Light the Fire. All volunteers must understand that no matter their role, volunteers are evangelizing. They are responding to the invitation of Jesus and the call of their baptism. All people will be witnessing to the love of God and contributing to the overall experience of Light the Fire. It is good to invite people of different personal, professional, spiritual, and demographic backgrounds. Most importantly, do not underestimate the youth and young adults. They can be a powerful witness, especially to their own generation.

Parish Community: Some groups have attempted to host events in parishes that are not their own. The leadership group must have a strong working relationship with the parish. If parish leadership does not seem to be on board with this type of event, it can stifle the fruitfulness, most especially in the follow-up stage. Many people who have a positive experience at Light the Fire will return to the same church because they are not familiar with any others. If that parish community is not willing and ready to welcome newcomers, then it may be wise to seek out a different location.

Training Evangelists: We strongly encourage the person leading the Light the Fire event, and anyone else who is interested in serving the role of evangelist, to take our online Introduction to Evangelization Training to better understand how the trained evangelist interacts with our culture. The key leader will train the rest of the volunteers before the event, so this background will be useful. Another option is to bring to the parish a professional speaker from our institute to offer a half day or day long Basic Evangelization Training workshop.

Volunteers open to the work of the Holy Spirit are crucial to the success of Light the Fire.

Training other volunteers: Volunteers who are not evangelizing should be given clear instructions regarding their roles. A simple handout explaining the different roles and basic flow of the event may be all that is needed. Leave 45-60 minutes in the schedule to give a short overview of the night and answer questions before the start of the event.



Volunteer Roles

Street Evangelists: Street evangelists, in pairs, are outside on the streets carrying baskets of tea light candles, inviting people to take a candle and come into the church to light it and offer a prayer. They may distribute candles to people who do not wish to enter the church. However, they always need to make the invitation to come into the church to light a candle as a symbol of a prayer they want to make. When a person does want to come in the church, one of the street evangelists will escort them to the entrance of the church.

Evangelists should keep conversations with people casual and inviting. People may feel intimidated and unsure of what to do, so the walk to the entrance should be positive and assuring.

Greeter: Greeters are at the door, welcoming people into the church. Greeters are sometimes people who need the emotional anchor of the church building in order to feel comfortable evangelizing. They might not be ready to go out into the streets.

Greeters escort guests to the front of the church to light their candles. A table may be used for food and open containers, so that if guests are carrying food and drink, they have a place to put the items until they leave the church. Men may be asked to take off their hats. The greeter should explain concisely to guests what is about to happen: they will light their candle and take time for silent prayer; then they will be invited to receive prayer ministry and confession, and tour the church if they so choose. The greeter may also engage in light conversation with guests. There should be a mix of light chatter and silence, especially if there is a line in front of the place where candles are being lit.

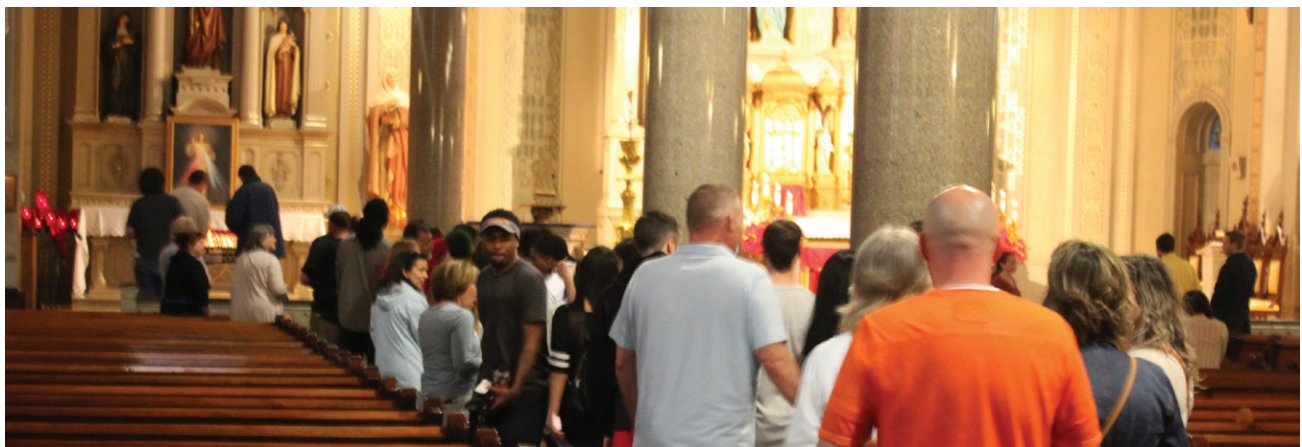
Conversation with greeters should not have any theological depth unless the guest specifically asks for it. Greeters should not be introducing topics like Eucharistic theology and transubstantiation. Many people would be turned off at that point because they would feel like the event was designed to proselytize them, or convince them of a viewpoint, instead of introducing or reintroducing them to Jesus.

Again, if the guest raises a question, the greeter should answer it concisely. Understanding conversion thresholds is beneficial when it comes to the role of evangelist and greeter. For more information on conversion thresholds, see Sherry Weddell's book, *Forming Intentional Disciples*.

Musicians: Musicians should fill the church with beautiful, church-appropriate, *instrumental* music. Most people may not be familiar with the lyrics to Christian hymns or praise songs, or may feel that listening to the lyrics is like listening to a sermon, and more than they bargained for. At the same time, most people will feel awkward in a place that is completely silent. In our modern, technologically advanced, noise-filled world, silence is uncomfortable. Even more, the right music will set the right atmosphere for prayer. If live music is not plausible, it is acceptable to play recorded music. A wide variety of instrumental music, from traditional hymns to contemporary Christian music may be appropriate. Arrangements mixing organ, piano, guitar, and other instruments are excellent choices. The music should be at a volume that allows for ease of conversation.

Prayer Ministry Team: Trained prayer ministers can be on hand to pray with people. Most dioceses and some parishes have prayer ministry guidelines and certify prayer ministers who complete available training courses. They need to demonstrate prudence in exercising their ministry. Many guests will not have had this kind of opportunity, so prayer ministers must be diligent in receiving the guests with love and care. This is not the opportunity for someone to experiment in prayer ministry. If you need training in prayer ministry we recommend our book *Ordinary Christians, Extraordinary Signs* or bringing our staff in for a day long “Healing in Evangelization” workshop. If you cannot provide trained prayer ministers you may need to simply point people to the priests that are available to offer ministry.

Priests: Priests should be on hand and available for confession, spiritual guidance, and conversation. Priests should be placed in locations in the church that are visible but still allow for privacy. Many people will feel very uncomfortable going to a priest in a confessional. One of the priests should be ready to do Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at the end of the evening.



Visitors are lined up inside the church, waiting to light their candle and pray

Intercessors: Intercessors are critical. These people are interspersed throughout the church, praying before the Blessed Sacrament, and interceding intensely for the event. It is not absolutely necessary that intercessors be physically present at the event, but it is good to have at least a few people on hand making intercession. In addition to obtaining grace for the guests, intercessors are also evangelizing by witnessing to the power of prayer.

Exit Evangelists: Exit evangelists are volunteers stationed at the exits of the church. As guests make their way out, exit evangelists engage them in conversation and proclaim the gospel to them. Exit evangelists need to understand the conversion thresholds and be able to speak about the basic message of the faith, the Gospel. (For more information on conversion thresholds, see Sherry Weddell's book, *Forming Intentional Disciples*.) They should be prepared to listen to and follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit. They should have the prudence necessary to gauge the awareness and openness of the guests. Exit evangelists do not need to speak with everyone but should be confident in sharing the Gospel with as many as they can.

Exit evangelists should have a table of resources to offer to those who request them. Minimally, people should leave with a card that gives them information about the event and a place to go for more information, like the parish website or the St. Paul Evangelization Institute “iBelieve” webpage.

Set-up and Break down: These volunteers help with the set-up and break down of the tables, candle stands, altar, bathrooms and other areas of the church. They work with the parish to identify and accommodate the needs of the event. They are evangelizing, too, since they are helping provide a positive experience for the guests.

Prayer ministers must be diligent in receiving the guests with love and care.

Volunteers can only take on one role at a time. They can choose one role for the entire event or they may rotate. For example, a person could begin as an intercessor, but after half an hour switch with another person to become a street evangelist. As long as they trained for the position, everyone can take on different roles throughout the course of the event. Most roles need to have a lead volunteer that should not change. This way there is consistency and leadership among volunteers who are working together in the role. This will also help aid the overall coordinator of the event so that they can know who to communicate with when issues come up that require all the volunteers in a particular area to make adjustments.



A family lights candles and prays at a side altar of the church

Flow of Traffic in the Church

Consistent flow helps in creating the best experience possible. All the volunteers should be aware of the flow of guests and be able to help guests when necessary. There should be one entrance/exit for the event. For the safety of everyone, other entrances should be locked. Stations should be set up conveniently along a path through the church, in such a way that guests can be easily led from one station to the next. Some teams plan for their guests to move first down the main aisle and then to the sides as they make their way back to exit the church. Some teams start their guests on one side, have them cross the middle, and then move down the other side to the exit.



Guests kneel or stand at the altar rail and pray in front of the exposed Blessed Sacrament

Station #1: Encounter— The first station is where guests lighting their candles. This can be done in front of the main altar or a side altar. Be mindful that some people may have trouble with stairs, so the candle-lighting station should be easily accessible for all (elderly, children, handicapped, etc.). Some churches have side altars and it might be appropriate to light a candle at a side altar.

Station #2: Ministry— The second station is prayer ministry. On the altar, the Blessed Sacrament needs to be exposed in a monstrance. An opportunity for silent prayer should occur in front of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. After they pray silently, they are also invited to be prayed with by prayer ministers. Prayer ministers should be off to the side but still visible, to accommodate for privacy and confidentiality. They should be gathered in pairs and no more than 2-3 people should pray with each person. Otherwise it becomes overwhelming and intimidating for guests.

Station #3: Priests— Priests should be stationed in the pews beyond the prayer ministers. They should be visible and accessible. Confessionals are not ideal for this type of situation/event.

Station #4: Conversation— Exit evangelists are stationed in the back of the church near the entrance/exit. Care should be taken so as not to block the entrance or exit of the guests. The resource table should also be located nearby.

Station #5: What's Next?— This is not a visible station but the next step for guests. Our cards invite them to get more information about the Gospel and the Catholic faith on our website (at stpaulse.com/ibelieve). Groups should think about what invitation they would like to extend to guests before they leave. Perhaps a card with Mass times, bible studies, and/or other upcoming event

Materials

Each event should have the following materials:

- Baskets with tea light candles. One for each pair of street evangelists, a couple for the greeters, and one near the place where guests will be lighting candles
- Holy Cards with an image of Jesus, information about the event (we suggest listing the stations), and a website where people can go for more information
- T-shirts that are distinguishable. It is important for guests and leaders to know who a volunteer is and who isn't. It also makes it easier for volunteers to spot each other
- Signage: Welcome signs and banners at entrance, signs at each station with a short description of the station
- The altar should be decorated for exposition. Lighting should focus on the Blessed Sacrament, but bright enough everywhere to make sure guests can get around the church

- A resource table with rosaries, devotions, bibles, books, and pamphlets for those that are wanting more information after the experience
- Handout with information for local parish and any upcoming event. Simple invitation flyers may be appropriate, perhaps even parish bulletins

Guests are given a card with a Divine Mercy image on the front. On the back are the steps that they take inside the church as well as next steps when they leave.



1	ENCOUNTER A private prayer to Jesus for yourself or for friends and family
2	MINISTRY Continue your prayer with another person
3	PRIESTS Priests available for counseling, advice, and/or Confession
4	CONVERSATION Catholics available for conversation, questions and answers
5	WHAT'S NEXT? More info at stpaulse.com/ibelieve



Security/Safety

It is preferable to have some volunteers specifically trained in security and safety. With the level of unknowns that come with this kind of event, security is important. Security personnel, properly trained, can help avoid bad situations. They can identify potential threats and deal with people who cause disturbances. Especially in areas with entertainment and nightlife, you may have people come in who are under the influence of alcohol, and even other substances. Security personnel need not be hired, but think about getting volunteers in the profession, such as retired or off-duty police officers.

It is a good idea to contact police and local businesses so that they know what is going on, especially if this is not a regularly occurring event. A medical professional who can help with first aid and CPR may be a good idea, as well. Again, with any group of people, you never know if an emergency will occur.

Schedule of Event

- A Mass and a simple meal for volunteers may be scheduled before the start of the event
- Include 45 minutes to an hour for set up time
- Begin with prayer and debriefing. The event coordinator should give any last minute reminders and announcements. Clearly state what time street evangelists should return to the church
- Exposition, under the normal rituals
- Volunteers man their stations
- Doors open
- Guests from the street are invited inside
- Candle lighting and prayer ministry
- Outdoor volunteers return
- Doors locked
- Benediction and closing remarks
- Clean up



Prayer teams pray with guests.
Priests are also nearby for Confession

Marketing

For volunteers: Market the event in as many ways as possible. There is no silver bullet. Use social media, parish contacts and bulletins, diocesan newsletters, and personal invitation. Volunteers should have pleasant personalities and a desire for people to encounter Jesus. It may help to contact your vocations director to have seminarians help. Religious communities are often interested in helping with these sorts of events. Lay people of various ages and demographics, however, should be your core group of volunteers.

For the community: If there is an event nearby earlier in the day, week, or weekend, it might be a good idea to have a few volunteers hand out cards marketing Light the Fire. These volunteers can invite people to come to the church at the hours the Light the Fire is going to be held. Letting businesses and organizations in the community know beforehand is also a good idea. You never know who will help in getting guests to the church doors. There is no need to market more than this to receive guests. We leave room for the Holy Spirit to work by allowing the event to retain a degree of spontaneity. It's not a bad thing for people to be surprised by an invitation to light a candle in the church.

For follow through: It would be a good idea to have photographers taking stills and video of the event. Someone with the ability to edit and present a somewhat professional photo album and video highlighting the event will provide opportunities for the parish and others who missed the event to know what happened. It may entice others to join as volunteers at the next Light the Fire.



SAINT PAUL

Evangelization Institute

SAINT PAUL

Street Evangelization

Saint Paul Street Evangelization is a grassroots, non-profit organization, dedicated to responding to the mandate of Jesus to preach the Gospel to all nations by taking the Catholic Faith to the streets. As an on-the-street Catholic evangelization organization, St. Paul Street Evangelization provides an avenue for people to share the Person of Jesus Christ and the truth and beauty of the Catholic Faith with a hungry culture.

Resources Include:

- Resources and coaching to help you start your own team
- Printable tracts
- Catholic audio lectures
- Seeker Small Groups
- New book: Ordinary Christians, Extraordinary Signs
- Street Ready Phone Interviews and Coaching sessions for Evangelists
- Light the Fire
- St. Paul Evangelization Store
- "Stories from the Street" blog and email newsletter
- Online library with 800+ Catholic books
- iBelieve page
- Miraculous Medals page

» streetevangelization.com

SAINT PAUL

Society of Evangelists

Saint Paul Society of Evangelists is a group of brothers who have dedicated their entire lives to the work of evangelization and have discerned a call to a religious vocation.

SAINT PAUL

School of Evangelization

Saint Paul School of Evangelization is designed to equip Catholics to learn more about their faith, and how to share it with others in a joyful non-confrontational manner.

You can start taking classes, access online evangelization resources, and receive significant discounts from our store by becoming a Sustaining Partner today. Your gift allows us to operate over 300 street teams world-wide.

Resources Include:

- Basic Evangelization Training (live workshop and/or online video course)
- 10 Great Ways (live workshop and/or online video course)
- Healing in Evangelization Training
- The live St. Paul School of Evangelization
- Catholic Hospitality Training
- Fr. Hardon's Catechism Course
- Team Leader Training
- Downloadable Resources
- Catholic Audio & Videos
- + Much more

» evangelizationschool.com

If you need help or have questions, contact:

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