

Evangelization 101

Implicit and Explicit Evangelization

The Church identifies two dimensions to evangelization, implicit and explicit, both of which are necessary for complete and effective evangelizing. In the words of Pope St. Paul VI,

"...even the finest witness will prove ineffective in the long run if it is not...made explicit by a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the Lord Jesus. The Good News proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life."

- Evangelii Nuntiandi 22

Implicit Proclamation of the Gospel – The *Witness of Life*

Implicit proclamation is the proclamation of the person of Jesus Christ through the witness of one's life. Let people see in the way you live the difference that Christ makes! Examples:

- **Do the people around you know that you are Catholic?** Include the practice of your Catholic faith in daily conversation. For example, after the weekend, it is typical of co-workers to ask, "What did you do this weekend?" Be sure to include what you did in the area of faith as well. You can respond, "On Saturday, I went to a barbeque and then Saturday evening, I went to Confession, which really took a load off! Sunday morning, the whole family went to Mass and in the evening we hung out and watched a movie."
- **Let your trust in God animate your behavior.** The sons and daughters of God should live with a sense of God's providential Fatherhood, letting it infuse their actions. We can witness to this by rushing around less, not getting stressed over petty things, moderating our work hours and responding to difficulties calmly. This communicates to others the great peace that comes from being a child of God and may cause some head-turning among co-workers, family members and classmates.

Explicit Proclamation of the Gospel - The *Word of Life*

Explicit proclamation is the use of our words to proclaim the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ as found in the life and teachings of the Church. Examples:

- **Sharing our faith goes much deeper than communicating information.** Our words about our faith need to be *personal*, showing that we believe in realities that we have personally experienced. The best way to do this is to tell stories of ways Christ has acted in your life, how much the sacraments have helped you find peace, how praying about something brought you answers and direction, etc... In this way, we are not only communicating information, but inviting others to consider a personal friendship with the Savior.
- **Do we know how to talk to others about Jesus?** Along with sharing your personal stories about how the Lord works in your life, we must also be comfortable and prepared to talk about the core, central message of our Faith, called the kerygma – that the Son of God became man, died on the Cross for love of us, rose from the dead, and now invites us into a relationship with him through the life of the Catholic Church. Do some prayerful study on the "Catholic kerygma" and this will strengthen your outreach to those who do not yet know the love of Christ!