

HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS FOR JESUS

Jesus Christ is the friendship of God. Sacred friendships are bridges to heaven. To be an evangelist is first and foremost to be an intimate friend with Christ and to invite others to the beauty and joy of that friendship. We all know how to be a friend: we are designed for loving, life-giving relationships for we are created in God's image. We proclaim God is three persons in love. This model of evangelization as friendship can:

- Heal the broken relationships with those who have left the Church inviting them to fullness of faith
- attract other to join the Church by the witness of friendship in our parish communities that display great care and concern for each member of the faithful
- guide how we relate to one another individually and as parish communities
- inspire us to be holy

Quotes from *The Church Evangelizing!*

"Be a friend. Be a friend of Jesus. Make friends for Jesus. These twelve words sum up what it means to be The Church Evangelizing! (#2)

"Jesus asks each of us to be His friend. He gave that invitation in the Gospel of John: "I have called you friends." Some of the basic rules of friendship we learned in kindergarten: "play nice," "share with others," "take turns," "care for others," "do not tattle." As we grew older, we learned that everyone needs a friend to be our "bridge over troubled water." That is Who Jesus is for us. And Jesus wants to become friends with everyone we know. Introducing our friends to Jesus is what it means to be The Church Evangelizing!" (#3)

Biblical Foundations of Friendship

Primary

John 15:12-15 *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."*

Secondary

John 21:15-17 *When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He then said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."*

Romans 12:10 *Love one another with brotherly affection. Out do one another in showing honor.*

Ephesians 4:29-31 *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Colossians 3:12-14 *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

Bible Examples of Friendship

- **Ruth and Naomi**

Ruth 1:16-17 *But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."*

- **David and Johnathan**

1 Samuel 18:1-3 *As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul.*

- **Job's Friends**

Job 2:11 *Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him.*

Next Steps

1. Pray for the Holy Spirit to open hearts to a deeper friendship with God in Christ and with one another.
2. Study biblical models of friendship.
3. Study how the sacraments form, feed and renew us for friendship with God in Christ.

To make the New Evangelization a reality is for each and every believer to become friends with Jesus Christ- much like the journey of Jesus meeting the disciples along the road to Emmaus. This journey of friendship includes moments for a deepening of our faith, increasing our participation in the sacramental life of the Church, and leads finally to our destination of being Christian witnesses.

1. **Faith:** Inviting Catholics to a deeper relationship with Christ, and a deeper understanding of and relationship with His Church, and knowledge of the faith.
 2. **Worship:** Inspiring confidence in the gospel and the teachings of the faith expressed in a vibrant community and sacramental life, most intensively in the Eucharist and Penance, but also through Marriage and greater appreciation of the family as the domestic church.
 3. **Witness:** Strengthening of our understanding of the Christian vocation lived through a public witness to Jesus Christ and to the life and dignity of the human person where believers, living out their vocation to be witnesses, affirm the freedom of religion and work to transform society through living and sharing their faith in Jesus Christ and giving recognition to the life and dignity of the human person.
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