

Leader Guide for SESSION 5: EVANGELIZATION AND CULTURE

Overview:

This session will provide a basic understanding of evangelization, and will challenge participants to reflect on the relationship between the Gospel and culture.

Session Outline:

- The facilitator should welcome everyone, provide time for any necessary introductions, and lead a brief opening prayer. Next, he/she should read the overview (see above) or provide an overview of the session in his/her own words.
- Watch Segment 1: What Is Evangelization? (2:27)
 - Group Discussion:
 - What is your initial reaction to your call to evangelize?
 - When and why did Jesus commission the Church to evangelize?
 - Give a different verse to each person or group of 2-3 persons: Lk. 24:48-49; Acts 1:8; Mt. 28:18-20
 - Have them read their verse out loud and answer the context (when) and why they think Jesus commissioned the Church to evangelize.
 - Read aloud:
 - Pope Paul VI once said: “Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ’s sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, §14).
 - Then answer as a group: **What does it mean that evangelization is the church’s deepest identity? Why does this matter?**
 - Read aloud:
 - Paul VI also said, “The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself. She is the community of believers...she needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe...She is the People of God immersed in the world, and often tempted by idols, and she always needs to hear the proclamation of the ‘mighty works of God’ which converted her to the Lord...In brief this means that she has a constant need of being evangelized, if she wishes to retain freshness, vigor, and strength in order to proclaim the Gospel...The church which is evangelized by constant conversion and renewal, in order to

evangelize the world with credibility” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, §15).

- Then answer as a group: **Why do we need to be evangelized before we can evangelize?**

- Watch Segment 2: The Gospel and Culture (3:48)
 - Discuss the following as a group:
 - What kind of culture were you immersed in prior to encountering Christ?
 - What happened to you? How did the Gospel “cut” through the culture and reach your heart?
- Takeaways and Closing Prayer
 - The facilitator should invite participants to briefly share their biggest takeaway or question from the session. The facilitator should note these carefully, as they will provide fodder for one-on-one follow up.
 - The facilitator should close the session with a prayer.