

Exploring the Life and Mission of the Church

5 - Witness and Evangelism

Often we look back and think of a time when many people would come to church on Sunday, wanting to know God and follow as a Christian, but evidence suggests that the inflow of interested people has largely dried up. Every disciple of Christ is called upon to bear witness to what Jesus means to them and what God is doing in their life. There is also a need to be pro-active in finding appropriate ways of sharing the Gospel story—through the above as well as other ‘formal’ means such as distributing material, media presentation, etc.

St Francis of Assisi is reported to have said “Preach the Gospel – use words if necessary” – we all need to develop our Outreach and Mission to include being willing to speak of our faith too.

Consider this selection of Scriptures and note the focus that each offers for our Witness :

Leviticus 19:12	_____
Isaiah 43:1, 10-13	_____
Matthew 5:13-16	_____
Matthew 28:19-20	_____
Luke 9:1-6	_____
Acts 1:8	_____
1 Peter 2:9	_____
1 Peter 3:15	_____
1John 1:3, 5-10	_____

Some Important Aspects from above verses:

A Holy Life (“different, called apart”)	To be Salt; flavour, preserve
To be Light; illuminate, attract	Chosen Witnesses
Empowered by Holy Spirit to witness	Sent out to Preach
Into all the World	Tell what you have seen & heard
Chosen to Proclaim	Always ready with a word in season

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- (a) Now :** In what ways do church members witness to their faith both in corporate church, and individually in their daily life/work?
 How well do our buildings speak of the Good News we celebrate to those who enter for church events and/or “hirings”?
 What are our current priorities for evangelism and how do we measure their effectiveness? What programmes/courses can we recommend to others in the Synod? What have worked and why?
- (b) In 5-10 years :** How do we want to be more effective in our witness and evangelism in the future? What changes would we want to make and for what result? How do we want the buildings to speak of God’s love to all who enter? How do we want to be resourced so that every member is willing and able to give an account for the faith we hold? What “stepping stones” can the church put into place to help individuals?
- (c) What can be done?** Having recognised the need for change and development above, what steps can we take immediately to move towards this change?
 What further, possibly larger, change do we need to make?
 What timescale are we willing to aim for to see change and development happen? What do we need help with and from whom?

Please use the grid on the next page to record the main points of your discussion.

Area of Church Life	Priorities for Development (from (b) above)	Practical Suggestions towards Implementation and likely timescale (from (c) above)
5. Witness and Evangelism		

Sample Readings on Witness and Evangelism **(session 5)**

Leviticus 19:2

²'Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them:
'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.'

Isaiah 43:1, 10-13

But now, this is what the LORD says – The LORD who created you, Jacob, and who formed you, Israel:

'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have summoned you by name; you are mine...

¹⁰'You are my witnesses,' declares the LORD, 'and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am the LORD.

Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.

¹¹I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no saviour.

¹²I have revealed, saved and proclaimed – I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses,' declares the LORD, 'that I am God.

¹³Yes, and from ancient days I am he.

No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?'

Matthew 5:13-16

¹³'You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Luke 9:1-6

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ²and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal those who were ill. ³He told them: 'Take nothing for the journey – no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. ⁴Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. ⁵If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.'⁶ So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

Acts 1:18

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

1 Peter 2:9

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Sample Readings on Witness and Evangelism - continued (session 5)

1 Peter 3:15

¹⁵But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

1 John 1:3, 5-10

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all^[b]sin.

⁸If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.