

Annotated List of Resources for Parish Outreach to Inactive Catholics

Resources about Inactive Catholics

Finley, Mitch. *It's Not the Same Without You: Coming Home to the Catholic Church*. New York: Doubleday, 2003.

This insightful and highly readable book consists of two parts. Chapters 1-5 focus on understanding alienated Catholics and chapters 6-8 highlight ways to reach out to them.

Kemp, Carrie. *Catholics Can Come Home Again! A Guide for the Journey of Reconciliation with Inactive Catholics*. New York: Paulist Press, 2001.

The fruits of this book are based on Carrie Kemp's fifteen-plus years of ministering to inactive and alienated Catholics. Chapter 4 presents a six-session process of reconciliation, and chapter 5 identifies and explains key issues that cause separation and alienation within the Church.

Duquin, Lorene Hanley. *When a Loved One Leaves the Church*. Huntington, In.: Our Sunday Visitor, 2001.

This resource is helpful for understanding the inactive Catholic. It answers questions like Why do they leave? and Whose fault is it? One section provides insights into situations in which inactive Catholics find themselves, such as losing the faith, being spiritual but not religious, or facing moral dilemmas. Another section deals with the reality that some inactive Catholics do return to the Church while others do not.

Resources to Facilitate Returning Catholics

Catholics Returning Home. See: [Http://www.catholicsreturninghome.org](http://www.catholicsreturninghome.org).

This parish-based ministry is designed to reach out and invite non-practicing/inactive Catholics to return "Home to the Catholic Church" and resume active practice of their faith. The program has three major outreaches per year: Christmas, Easter, and Fall. The same six-week series is repeated. The weekly sessions provide updated information on the basics of Catholicism in a non-threatening, RCIA-like, support-group format. For details, refer to *Inviting Catholics Home* by Sally L. Mews, below.

Mews, Sally L. *Inviting Catholics Home: A Parish Program*. Liguori, Mo.: Liguori Publications, 2002.

This book provides essential information for a parish team offering the Catholics Returning Home process. The chapters include insights and reflections on why people leave the Church and why they return, an overview of the Catholics Returning Home Program, and specific details on ways to help non-practicing Catholics become active again. See: www.liguori.org.

Landings, a Reconciliation Ministry of the Paulist Fathers. See: [Http://www.Landings-International.org](http://www.Landings-International.org).

Landings is a safe harbor or landing place for returning Catholics to explore their faith and their future with the Church. A group of six to eight active Catholics comes together to welcome two or three returning Catholics to share and explore our faith. After an initial conversation with a priest or trained representative of the Church, the returning Catholic is directed to a *Landings* group. The group will meet for about ten weeks in two-hour sessions. A weekend retreat concludes the program, perhaps with other *Landings* groups from the diocese.

Resources for Inviting Inactive Catholics to Return

Catholics Reaching Out. Washington: Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association, 2005. See: www.pncea.org.

A set of resources to encourage and equip active Catholics to invite inactive Catholics to consider returning to the Church. Resources include: *We Miss You* invitations, *Parishioner Guide*, *Parish Manual*, and an attractive *Display Poster* with attachable pocket. A Starter Kit with copies of each item is available.

Reconciling Community—Celebrating the Sacrament of Penance. Washington: Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association, 2005. See: www.pncea.org.

A set of resources to encourage the celebration of the sacrament of Penance by active and inactive Catholics. The resources include: a *Parish Guide and CD* which provides sample letters of invitation and prayers for seasonal communal penance services; a pocket-sized *Examination of Conscience*; and *What is the Sacrament of Penance*, a brochure that explains the revised rite of reconciliation and answers frequently asked questions.

PNCEA's New Movers List Program. See: www.pncea.org.

Approximately 20% of people who become inactive do so after moving to a new community. They just don't reconnect. It is now much easier to reach out to the new movers in the community by mail and personally invite them to the parish. The Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association can provide an electronic file of new movers lists by zip code to parishes on a monthly basis to support that outreach.

Spirituality for an Evangelizing Parish: PNCEA Parish Missions. See: www.pncea.org.

Teams of two (a priest and lay/religious woman) conduct 5-day parish missions around the themes of evangelization. As part of the preparation for the mission, the parish is encouraged to conduct a prayer campaign for inactive Catholics. Parishioners are encouraged to bring inactive Catholics they know to the mission.

Materials to Give Inactive Catholics

Catholic Prayers for Every Day

A pocket-size pamphlet containing a number of popular and memorable Catholic prayers. Available through www.pncea.org.

Mews, Sally L. *Returning Home to Your Catholic Faith: An Invitation*. Liguori, Mo.: Liguori Publications, 2003.

This short book helps an inactive Catholic return to the Church. The topics covered include reasons for returning, changes in the Church, how to reconnect with a parish, and insights and explanations about the Mass, the sacrament of reconciliation, and the Nicene Creed.

What is the Sacrament of Penance?

A PNCEA brochure which answers frequently asked questions about the sacrament of penance and reconciliation. See *Reconciling Community* above for more details. Available at www.pncea.org.

Handbook for Today's Catholic. Liguori, Mo.: Liguori Publications, 2004.

Written in easy-to-read, easy-to-understand language, the *Handbook for Today's Catholic* details the essential truths, popular prayers and practices of the Catholic faith, and suggests practical ways to integrate faith and life. Also available in Spanish.

DeSiano, Frank, CSP. *Yes, I Can Believe*. Washington: Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association, 2005.

This booklet offers six easy-to-read essays on God, God's word, Jesus, Jesus' Church, a life of holiness, and everlasting life. Each essay connects our human longings with the gifts of Catholic belief and ends with questions for quiet reflection. It can help the returning Catholic discover all that his/her faith has to offer.

Resources for the Parish Leaders of Outreach

DeSiano, Frank, CSP, and Kenneth Boyack, CSP. *Commentary and Planning Guide for Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*. Washington: Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association, 1993.

Through a discussion of the goals and strategies for the U.S. bishops' national plan, this book provides a background and context for a parish's ministry of reconciliation. The book contains the text of the U.S. bishops' document, *Go and Make Disciples*.

DeSiano, Frank, CSP, and Kenneth Boyack, CSP. *Discovering My Experience of God*. New York: Paulist Press, 1992.

Designed to facilitate the faith-sharing process, this pastoral resource enables the reader to become aware of the contours of his or faith and then equips the reader to share this experience. This book could be helpful in the formation process for the *Catholics*

Reaching Out coordinating team and for the parish representatives who will talk with returning Catholics.

Go and Make Disciples, A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States. Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1993.

Developed through the USCCB Committee on Evangelization, this document presents a vision of Catholic evangelization and three goals through which parishes can achieve their full evangelizing potential. Specific sections refer to the invitation and reconciliation of inactive Catholics.

John Paul II. *The Church in America.* Washington: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1999.

Subtitled *On the Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: The Way to Conversion, Communion, and Solidarity in America*, this apostolic exhortation presents reflections on the power of encountering Christ and how this encounter can change a person's life.

Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States. Washington: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1999.

This resource contains sections that highlight the qualities of mature adult faith and discipleship and identify six essential dimensions of adult faith formation content. The book presents a model of faith formation for both active Catholics and those returning to the Church.

Rivers, Robert S., CSP. *From Maintenance to Mission: Evangelization and the Revitalization of the Parish.* New York: Paulist Press, 2005.

Each chapter develops an insight into Catholic evangelization. The book contains three parts. Part I offers insights around Vatican II and the Church's evangelizing mission; Part II focuses on *Go and Make Disciples*, the U.S. bishops' plan for Catholic evangelization; and Part III highlights the elements of an evangelizing parish. This book helps a reader to understand the theory and context for a parish's reconciliation ministry.