

THRESHOLDS OF CONVERSION & PHASES OF DISCIPLESHIP

Thresholds of Conversion

Initial Trust • John 4:29

- Is able to trust or has a positive association with Jesus Christ, the Church, a Christian believer, or something identifiably Christian.

Spiritual Curiosity • Luke 19:2-4

- Is intrigued by or desires to know more about Jesus, His life, and His teachings or some aspect of the Christian faith.

Spiritual Openness • John 9:36

- Has acknowledged to himself/ herself and to God that he/she is open to the possibility of personal and spiritual change.

Spiritual Seeking • Jeremiah 29:13; Acts 17:27

- Is moving from being essentially passive to actively seeking to know the God who is calling him/her.
- Is engaged in an urgent spiritual quest, seeking to know whether he/she can commit to Christ and His Church.

DISCIPLESHIP

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Beginning Disciple • Acts 2:37-38; CCC* 1427; CCC1

- Has a favorable change of attitude towards Jesus Christ and the Church He established.
- Has a change of attitude towards sin and turns away from it.
- Has made a verbal profession of commitment to Jesus Christ to others.
- Has a desire to grow spiritually.
- Has received the sacraments of initiation or has gone to Confession if already a Catholic.

Growing Disciple • James 1:19-25; CCC1694

- Has developed a heart for God that motivates his/her attitudes and actions.
- Is willing to make any sacrifices to grow, even change his/her schedule.
- Is committed to chastity, sobriety, and excellence in their state of life.
- Is consistent in continually growing in the basic habits of the Christian life: reads scripture, receives the sacraments, builds character through the virtues, accepts suffering, practices the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, is open to the Holy Spirit.

Commissioned Disciple • Matthew 28:18-20; CCC905

- Has decided to answer the call to take an active part in the mission of the Church.
- Is actively striving to win people over to Jesus and His mission, to equip them and to send them out to do the same (John 15:8).
- Has regular participation in personal prayer and sacramental life of the Church; fulfills vocational commitments; leading a life of evangelization and discipleship; lives an influential life of faith, in the parish, community, and workplace.

Disciple Maker • 1 Thessalonians 2:8; CCC1816; Timothy 2:2; CCC3

- Has led someone to commit his/her life to Jesus Christ and His mission and is helping them engage in the work of evangelization, disciplemaking, and friendships through a mentoring relationship.
- Has developed a heart for God's people and is willing to make any sacrifice to help another grow, even change his/her schedule (1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- Is making life decisions (vocation, location, relationships, etc.) based upon how he/she can most effectively fulfill the Great Commission.
- Has been the major influence in helping others become disciple makers (has produced a strong third generation).
- Has been taught and equipped to remain active in lifelong Catholic mission.

*CCC denotes the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

JOURNEY OF DISCIPLESHIP

Moving Through the Thresholds of Conversion:

Initial Trust — A person has a positive association with Jesus Christ, the Church, a Christian believer. This is not yet active faith. Trust is the bridge that helps people move closer to God.

How you can help people in this threshold:

- Build friendships - this is where trust happens
- Trust is not about winning theological battles
- Remember that we cannot evangelize we do not love

Spiritual Curiosity — A person is intrigued by or desires to know more about Jesus but is not yet open to personal change. A person in this threshold is still passive.

How you can help people in this threshold:

- Talk about Jesus Christ! Share the kerygma (Good News of Christ) with them.
- Tell stories to awaken curiosity. Share your personal witness.

Spiritual Openness — A person is open to the possibility of personal and spiritual change. People who are open are simply admitting they are open to the possibility of change but not that they are committed to change.

How you can help people in this threshold:

- Practice nonjudgmental truthfulness
- Ask thought-provoking questions
- Help them connect the dots - help them to see the ways God has been working in their lives
- Encourage them to ask God for a sign
- Ask them if you can pray for them to be open to God
- Ask them if they would be willing to pray themselves and acknowledge their openness to God

Spiritual Seeking — A person is actively seeking to know the God who is calling him or her. The question he or she will ask is, "Can I commit myself to Christ and the Church?"

How you can help people in this threshold:

- Focus on the person of Jesus and the kerygma. Leave other doctrinal issues for later
- Understand that following Christ has personal implications: it will make real demands

Intentional Discipleship — This is the decision to "drop one's nets:" to make a conscious commitment to follow Jesus in the midst of His Church and to reorder one's life accordingly.

Progressing along the Phases of Intentional Discipleship:

Beginning Disciples and Growing Disciples - Have hearts for God and are willing to make any sacrifice to grow. Catechesis is essential in these phases.

Commissioned Disciples and Disciple Makers - Have hearts for God's people and are willing to make any sacrifice to help others grow. They are teaching teachers how to teach (2 Tim 2:2).