

Four Simple Ways to Reach Out to an Inactive Catholic

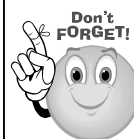
1. Pray for the person

Holy Spirit, help me to recognize opportunities to share my faith today, especially with (put in names). Remind me that you love this person unconditionally. May I respect their journey and respond accordingly. I ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



2. Offer what the person needs

Various type of people	What the person would appreciate	Suggested outreach (Besides inviting the person to Mass, consider the following...)
Corporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarly materials Events that are intellectually challenging One-time events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite to a lecture Suggest an intellectual Catholic book, quality articles, Catholic websites Give CD on Church topics
Seeker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete ways to feed their spiritual hunger Learning methods of prayer Ways to connect with the divine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest books on Christian spirituality. Introduce to various types of prayer—Taize, meditation, rosary, Eucharistic adoration, small Christian communities Visit local religious shrines
Overwhelmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who understands their pressures Help juggling work, home, children and other commitments On-going support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite to events that incorporate a light meal and, if necessary, child care Offer opportunities to gather with peers Provide practical talks and materials that address their busy life
Angry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human face to the Church Non-judgmental listener On-going support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite to activities outside of Church Provide opportunities to meet parishioners and staff in a social setting Introduce to Social Justice events
Hurting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compassionate and non-judgmental listener On-going support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite to Healing services Suggest diocesan or parish support ministries Invite to lectures or offer reading materials on forgiveness



The key question is

not “Why did you leave”?

but “What would you need to come back”?

3. Respond to “OPEN DOORS”

OPEN DOORS are opportunities inactive Catholics give us to speak about the Faith.



If someone opens a door through . . .

- ◆ **QUESTIONS:** about God, good and evil, meaning and purpose in life.
Your Response: Active listening and non-threatening comments. Offer resources.
- ◆ **MEMORIES:** reminiscing about Catholic schools, nuns, priests, parish, devotions, etc.
Your Response:
Positive memories—revisit parish or connect with individual. Attend Catholic devotion.
Negative memories—apologize in name of Church.
- ◆ **READING:** Person has picked up some Catholic reading materials and asks questions.
Your Response: Know your faith so that you can answer the questions or be able to direct them to find the answer.
- ◆ **CURRENT EVENTS:** Catholic news events can trigger an interest in the person.
Your Response: Clearly explain the event, what impact it would have, ask if they have questions.
- ◆ **MAJOR LIFE EVENTS:** Illness, death, divorce, births, loss of job, relocation
Your Response: Offer personal support, suggest support groups, introduce to community.

4. React to comments with compassion

I am no longer a practicing Catholic

I am sorry to hear that. For whatever reason you left the Church, I hope you will give us another chance.

I am too busy at this time to think about Church.

I can only imagine how hectic your life must be with all that is on your plate. I don't want to add anything to your plate but to offer you some balance to your schedule.

I am angry at the Church because...

While divine, the Church is a human institution as well. It is unfortunate that we cause pain to one another. In the name of the Church, I apologize and hope that you will join us again.

I am divorced and remarried. I was told that the Church has excommunicated me. If the Church doesn't want me, I don't need the Church.

I am sorry that you picked up that message from us. While you may not be able to receive the Eucharist, you are not excommunicated; and the Church doesn't want you to feel separated.