

Tools for Evangelizing Family and Friends

I have a family member who is no longer active in the faith.

What can I do?

1. Pray | You can do a lot on your own, but to really affect a change of heart in someone we need to offer them up in prayer.
2. Patience | Family members will take longer to come around than someone you might meet in RCIA... You are often working through years of perception and baggage, good or bad. Remember, Saint Monica watched her son (St. Augustine) abandon the faith for about 10 years before he converted.
3. Don't Nag | Do you like walking onto a new or used car lot only to be hovered over by a salesperson? Don't do that with your family members. Invite a son to Christmas Mass; invite a cousin who is already in town to Easter Sunday Mass; then leave it at that for a while... resist the urge to be too persistent.
4. Refer to a Mutual Friend | Sometimes a mutual third party can gain more ground than you can as a family member. Don't be afraid to work through another person.
5. Know the Wound | Take time to reflect on the deeper reason someone may have given up on the Catholic faith (e.g. apathy, convicted there is no God, unwilling to accept particular hard teaching, etc.)
6. Study | "Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.." (1 Peter 3:15)
7. Share your story | Share how you see God working in your life. Through your own personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you will see how everyday small things are God's handiwork. Talk about these moments openly and stop there; don't preach at the same time.

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Questions to ponder

Who is a friend or family member I'd most like to invite back to Church?

1. Why has _____ drifted away?
2. Does _____ have any mutual friends with me who I can enlist to help?
3. What are some of _____'s potential questions about the faith?
4. Is there an upcoming opportunity where I can invite _____ to attend Mass or a program at church?
5. Is _____ perhaps ready for an invitation to Confession?
6. Who else can I enlist to help me pray for _____?

Additional Resources:

www.catholicscomehome.org (numerous resources)

www.churchnativity.tv (online Mass, podcasts – look under messages)

New Saint Thomas Institute (newsaintthomas.com) – Dr. Taylor Marshall – 5 Common Mistakes Catholics Make in Defending Catholicism (and many other podcasts on youtube)

Johnette Benkovic – www.womenofgrace.com

Contact hfevangelization@gmail.com if you have feedback on today's session and/or would like more sessions on this topic.