



# *Entertaining Angels*

The Catholic Hospitality Training Institute™



# Hospitality & Evangelization Training

## Participant Manual

[www.catholic-institute.com](http://www.catholic-institute.com)



THE CATHOLIC  
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INSTITUTE

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# Welcome

*“Every person can be an open door for Jesus Christ.”*

We are glad that you are here with us today. First contact staff and volunteers are among the most important people that make our parish operate. Without your support and participation in the life of the parish, our priests and administrative staff would be paralyzed — there is no way they would be able to operate their ministries.

It is through your day to day dedication to the well-being of the parish that a parish will either thrive or become stagnant. This training is dedicated to helping you participate in the ministry of the parish by identifying ways that every staff member and volunteer can create a missionary oriented and evangelical environment where new visitors are not met as strangers but as welcomed friends.

We live in a world that is broken, among people who are deeply wounded and hurting. The very reason that the Catholic Church exists is to evangelize. To make disciples of Jesus Christ who live in the freedom of the cross, having been forgiven of their sins and their wounds bound up and healed.

Your participant guide will be your companion today and when you return to your parish. Please use it to take notes and jot down your reflections and ideas. The material we cover today will be the foundation for the spirit of hospitality you help create when you return to your parish.



**Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,  
for thereby some have entertained angels  
unawares.**

— HEBREWS 13:2

# Training Outline

The training will focus on the following four areas. Each section will help you develop the attitudes and behaviors that will allow you to serve the people of Christ in a compassionate, Christ like and powerful way.

## Called To Holiness

The day begins with a look at our unique calling to live a life that is holy and pleasing to the Lord. We will focus on our gifts of brokenness, perspective and surrender considering how each one provides an opportunity to allow Christ to work through us and draw us closer.

We will also take a look at the roots of hospitality in Church Tradition and Sacred Scripture to help us understand how our hospitality can be a beautiful and powerful fruit of our holiness.

## Called To Share

During section two of our training we will focus on understanding and spreading the Gospel message. We will focus on the gifts of evangelism, Gospel sharing and prayer. Authentic hospitality is a reflection of Christ's love shining through us. In order to understand and share that love we must be strongly connected to Christ through prayer. We will focus on personal, formal and spontaneous prayer and take some time to practice praying with and for others.



## Called To Serve

Christ came to earth to serve rather than be served. During the third segment of our training we will learn to imitate Christ's service by focusing on the gifts of joy, service and peace. Special attention will be given to resolving conflict, dealing hospitably with difficult people and offering and accepting forgiveness.

## Called To Build His Kingdom On Earth

The final segment is where we put all the pieces into practice. Participants will develop and practice skills for sharing the Gospel with those they meet. Using the gifts of connecting, comforting and mercy we will have an opportunity to plan and practice interactions both in person and on the phone.

# *Entertaining Angels*

**W**e were each created in the image and likeness of God; we are his and he longs for us to remain in his presence and bask in his limitless love. In response to the many gifts and blessings he bestows on his beloved children he asks simply that we love him and love those he created. The central teaching of the Gospel calls us to love and serve Christ and the most beautiful way we can live out this call is by service to others. As people of first contact, you have a unique opportunity to follow Jesus' command to love and to

serve. In Matthew's Gospel we read, 'Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Hospitality is the attitude and behavior that allows us to welcome others and prepare them to receive the love and service God intends us to share with them.

Hospitality is how we draw others in and help them become open to the gifts of the Father. It is perhaps one of the most important tools in the New Evangelization but it is a skill and an art. During this training we will focus on four areas necessary

to develop the attitudes and behaviors that will allow us to make our parishes places of rich, warm, Christ like hospitality. No matter what your role in the parish might be, you have a unique way to love, serve and build the Kingdom here on earth. Through this unique one day training, first contact staff will be evangelized and prepared to receive others in the name of Jesus Christ. Additionally, the Catholic Hospitality Training Institute provides ongoing training and materials that can be shared with the entire staff.

## Hospitality Prayer

As morning breaks I look to you, Oh Lord.

Be my strength this day.

Heavenly Father, bless the work I will do this day  
and let all my actions bring Christ to the world.

May I be an open door for Jesus Christ  
to each person that I serve today,  
that they may encounter You.

Give me your Holy Spirit that I may show hospitality  
to everyone who walks through our doors.

Be with me, and be my joy.

You are in charge of this day Lord

You know what's coming and I surrender my agenda to yours.

Amen.

# Called To Holiness

In this session we will look at the gifts of Brokenness, Perspective and Surrender. Each of these three gifts has a unique way of forming us into Disciples of Christ. We will explore how Christ works through each of them both in ourselves and in others.

How would you define holiness?

Before we dive into our content, please take a minute to complete the following statements. When everyone at your table is finished, please go around the table and share your statements.

My name is: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a: \_\_\_\_\_

and I: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** please jot down thoughts, quotes or ideas about Brokenness, Perspective, and Surrender that hit your heart and make you think. s

# Hospitality in Scripture

In our culture, people are expected to pay in order to receive hospitality (hotels, restaurants, theatres). In the Bible, hospitality to others was considered a personal responsibility, not a luxury for the 'deserving'. Here is just a sampling of what Scripture reveals about hospitality.

Genesis 18:1-8	Abraham welcomes 3 visitors.
Isaiah 58:7	Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?
Matthew 25:35	I was a stranger and you welcomed me.
Romans 12:20	"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."
Luke 14:13-14	But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.
Hebrews 13:2	Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.
1 Peter 4:9	Be hospitable to one another without complaining.

Which passage or passages speak to you?

Go around the table and share your thoughts or reactions to these verses or topics from session one and the way they can have an impact on how you perform your tasks as a person of first contact.

Write your definition of Catholic hospitality:

How is God using His word to draw you deeper in holiness?

# Called To Share

In this session we will look at the gifts of Evangelization, the Gospel and Prayer. We are each gifted with a unique opportunity to share the love, hope and story of the Lord and this session will equip you with the knowledge and skill to live that opportunity to the fullest.

What does the term evangelization mean to you?

**Notes:** please jot down thoughts, quotes or ideas about Evangelization and the Gospel message that hit your heart and make you think.

## Story time:

Recall a favorite Bible story. It can be from the Old or the New Testament, then complete the questions about that story.

My Favorite Bible Story is:

How is the power or plan of God demonstrated in this story?

In order to practice the gift of spreading the Gospel, please go around the table and share your response to the above questions.

# Prayer

**Notes:** please jot down thoughts, quotes or ideas about prayer that hit your heart and make you think.

Hail Mary... Holy Mary,  
mother of God, pray for  
\_\_\_\_\_  
who asks for the grace of  
\_\_\_\_\_  
now and at the hour of his/  
her death. Amen.

## Spontaneous Prayer with others

- A:** Adoration (words of praise, adoration, greatness of God)
- C:** Contrition (sorrow, faults, weaknesses, shortcomings)
- T:** Thanksgiving (things, people and opportunities)
- S:** Supplication (what we need)

**EXAMPLE:** God our Father, you are good and worthy and we adore you. We praise your name Lord and we are sorry for the many ways we have failed you. Please forgive us for the ways we have hurt you and hurt others. Thank you for the gift of (Name of the person you're praying with). We ask you to please bless him/her and provide for this need (name it if you can). Help them to know you are with them, Jesus. We ask this in your name. Amen.

# Called To Serve

**Notes:** please jot down thoughts, quotes or ideas about Joy, Service and Peace that hit your heart and make you think.

## Finding Peace in Conflict

1. Take it to the Lord in Prayer
2. Speak gently and humbly with HIS permission
3. The Peace Sandwich – Compliment/Complaint/Compliment
4. Be Motivated by Love and desire their holiness

## Making Peace in Conflict

1. Express Regret
2. Accept Responsibility
3. Repent
4. Make Restitution
5. Request Forgiveness

## Tips for being in the middle of a conflict

Talking to the offended...

Communicate that they are loved, valued and wanted. Praise and comfort without gossip and taking sides.

Ask them to explain what happened. Listen calmly, repeat for clarity. Be empathetic to their feelings.

Always assume the best about people's intentions. Do not be unkind, assure the offended that you will speak to the offender and encourage forgiveness.

## Talking to the offender...

1. Communicate that they are loved, wanted and valued.
2. Ask them what happened. There may be more to the story we don't know. Perhaps a misunderstanding is at root.
3. Encourage reconciliation.

## Praying through forgiveness

1. Identify the emotion. Hurt? Jealousy? Shame? Anger?
2. Ask for Lord to show you the root of that emotion.
3. Ask Jesus to set you free.
4. Forgiveness is not a feeling but a choice.

*“Jesus, I surrender this offense to you and forgive (name).  
Please give me the grace to love them, bless them  
and desire their holiness.”*

**A**s we think about peacefully serving the Lord and his people, let's take a few moments and examine our heart. Quietly ponder each item as it is read.

1. Have I behaved in ways that would close the door on opportunities to evangelize?
2. What is my tone of voice when someone interrupts me because they need help? Even if I didn't mean to, is it possible I came across as 'busy' or that I don't have time to help?
3. What is my attitude when interacting with a stranger? Do I treat them like they are an interruption?
4. How patient am I when someone will not stop talking, even though I can tell it's because they have no one else to talk to?
5. Have I cared to make our parish office a beautiful pleasant restful peaceful place?
6. Have I ever thought about what it's like for a person coming in the door (who knows nothing about where buildings are located, who the staff is, or "the way things run here")?
7. Have my interactions with other staff members caused stress or frustration? Am I kind and forgiving to my fellow staff members, or do I harbor resentments, even gossiping about others behind their backs?
8. Think of a time when you were successful at practicing hospitality toward a guest, and a time when you really fell short.

# Let's Start Over

**W**e cannot move forward without letting go of all our mistakes and past failures. On his deathbed, after a lifetime of ongoing conversion and ever-deeper holiness, St. Francis of Assisi said to his brothers: "Let us begin again". If it's good enough for St. Francis, it is good enough for us! Take a moment to surrender the past: mistakes you've made, relationships you've damaged, parish-ioners or fellow staff you've gossiped about... and let's start over together.

Let's pray together a Litany of Forgiveness, concluding with an Act of Love.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus Christ, you said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. We are called to bless those who are wounded, and yet we often keep our own collection of offenses and lack compassion for others who are deeply hurt.

**ALL:** Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus Christ, you said: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth". Yet we are often so concerned about our own rights and self-interest and so little concerned about serving others.

**ALL:** Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus Christ, you said: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Yet we are impatient under our burdens and unconcerned about the burdens of others.

**ALL:** Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus Christ, you said: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall have their fill." Yet we do not thirst for you, the fountain of all holiness — we are so often satisfied with half-measures and mediocrity.

**ALL:** Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus Christ, you said: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy". Yet we are so quick to condemn, so slow to forgive others.

**ALL:** Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus Christ, you said: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God". Yet we have often regarded persons created in your image as interruptions, and we fail to see you in those we serve.

**ALL:** Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

*continued...*

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus Christ, you said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Yet we are so often ruthless with each other, and our homes and our world are full of discord and resentments.

**ALL:** Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

**LEADER:** Lord, Jesus Christ, you said: "Blessed are those who suffer persecution for holiness' sake, for the Kingdom of God is theirs." Yet we suffer no opposition because we have been ashamed of you, our Crucified Savior, and have lived worldly compromises of your Gospel.

**ALL:** Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

**ALL:** Oh my God, I love you above all things, because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for love of you. Forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

### **Reflection:**

Christ's peace love and mercy are free to all of His Children. In what ways do you need more of those gifts to live out your holiness and service to others?

# *Called to Build His Kingdom on Earth*

**Notes:** please jot down thoughts, quotes or ideas about Connecting, Comforting and Mercy that hit your heart and make you think.

## **Making Strong Connections**

1. Don't criticize, condemn, or complain.
2. Give honest, sincere appreciation.
3. Become genuinely interested in others.
4. Smile.
5. Be a good listener.
6. Make people feel important.
7. Don't argue.
8. Respect ideas and opinions.
9. Try to see things their way.
10. Don't be afraid to toss out a challenge.
11. Prayer is powerful.

## **Remembering Names**

1. Get it right the first time.
2. Use it right away.
3. Ask for a card and study it.
4. Write it down.
5. Connect the name to something.

# Environment

- S:** Space
- L:** Lighting
- A:** Air
- M:** Media
- S:** Sound

## Personal and Phone Contact Ideas:

### A Cold Parish vs. A Warm Parish

A COLD PARISH	A WARM PARISH
Is intimidating. Visitors are made to feel as though they do not have the required insider information or insider jargon to belong. Seems to have an unknown standard for attire/dress.	Has its own unique culture, but draws people into that life and helps to explain itself to the stranger.
Is cliquey. Those who do not already belong go mostly unnoticed, or are looked upon with suspicion.	Is made up of parishioners who care deeply about one another, but still notice the marginalized, the new, and the visitors.
Leaves visitors on their own when they come to church. Visitors have to fight their way into relationships with other people.	The attitude of volunteers and staff says, 'We're glad you're here- We want to serve you. We will not leave you to get there by yourself.'
Says: 'you are an outsider, and you are on your own.'	Says, 'We may not know you yet, but we are interested in who you are. You belong here. There is life and relationship available here and we will help to you discover it.'

# *Prayer of Consecration*

God our Father, I believe that you created me out of love.  
In a thousand ways I have sinned against you.  
I repent of all of my sins. Please forgive me.

Thank you for sending your Son  
to die for me, to save me from hell.  
I choose this day to renew my covenant with you  
and to place Jesus at the center of my heart.  
I surrender to Him as Lord over my whole life.

I ask you now to flood my heart and soul  
with your Holy Spirit and to grant me the gift of new life.  
Give me the grace and courage to live as a missionary  
disciple for the rest of my days.

Amen.

# Find Someone Who

1. Has brown eyes \_\_\_\_\_
2. Has the same shoe size \_\_\_\_\_
3. Has been to 4 different states  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Is wearing red \_\_\_\_\_
5. Has gotten more than 2 speeding tickets  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Needs prayer \_\_\_\_\_ Their intention  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Has more children than you  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Is a grandparent \_\_\_\_\_
9. Said the Rosary this morning  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Has ever shoved stuff in a closet as  
company pulled into the driveway  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Is named after a Saint \_\_\_\_\_
12. Has misplaced keys, phone at least once  
this month \_\_\_\_\_
13. Was born in the same month  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Loves coffee, chocolate or golf  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Has ever had to wash the same load  
of laundry more than once because  
you forgot to put it in the dryer  
\_\_\_\_\_

# *Parish Evaluation and Action Plan*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parish \_\_\_\_\_

For each section of the training choose three steps that you plan on taking to create a welcoming and hospitable parish environment. Choose at least one step that you can implement immediately.

## **Called To Holiness**

1. I will begin each work day with the Hospitality Prayer.
2. I will remind myself before answering the phone or speaking to guest that we are all broken and in need of God's healing love.
3. Each person will feel welcomed and valued in my office.
4. I will write my true purpose at the top of each task list in order to remind myself of the things that are truly important in my work.
5. Pray for the intercession of St. Andre Bessette or Venerable Salanus Casey for a spirit of humility and compassion.
6. I will post a Scripture verse in my view to remind me of God's call to hospitality.
7. I will make people will feel like family when they come to visit.
8. I will commit to serving each person as if they were Jesus.
9. Commit to making people feel better by the time they leave.

## Called To Share

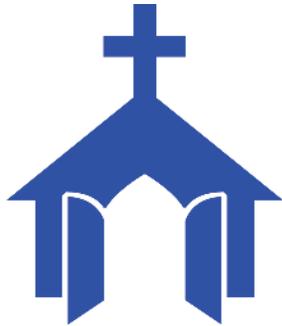
1. I will commit to a habit of daily prayer.
2. I will search out and commit to memory some Scripture verses that offer inspiration, focus, perspective or hope.
3. I will commit to sharing the Gospel when possible.
4. I will ask others if there is anything going on in their life I could pray for.
5. I will share the things Christ is doing in my life.
6. 6. I will pray daily for the specific needs of my parish and the intention or needs of others.
7. I will offer to pray with someone.
8. I will help organize a common prayer time for all of the parish staff.

## Called to Serve

1. Greet each person with an attitude of understanding and joy.
2. I will say a prayer to the Holy Spirit before each phone or in person exchange.
3. I will pray daily for God to help me develop a servant's heart.
4. Apologize to someone I have offended.
5. Let go of offenses committed by others. Start anew.
6. Commit to being a better mediator.
7. Tell each person that we value them and they are wanted.
8. Build bridges of trust with parishioners.
9. Talk to others about how God is working in their own life.

## Called To Build His Kingdom on Earth

1. I will commit to making stronger connections by:
2. I will commit to making stronger connections by:
3. I will focus on remembering people's names by employing the strategies learned.
4. Invite someone unfamiliar with our parish to check our environment using the S.L.A.M.S. categories.
5. I will commit to keeping a note pad by the phone and stopping all activity to focus completely on each caller.
6. I commit to ending each interaction with reference to the Loving Father.
7. I commit to the stop...stand...smile procedure when a guest arrives in the office.



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