



St. Charles / St. Ann Parish
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Evangelization Resource

COURAGE UNDER FIRE: CAUGHT IN THE CROSSHAIRS

Catholics Living Boldly for the Faith

This year, the Catholic Church celebrates “The Year of Faith.” Pope Benedict XVI writes, “There is no action more beneficial - and therefore more charitable - towards one's neighbour than to break the bread of the word of God, to share with him the Good News of the Gospel, to introduce him to a relationship with God: evangelization is the highest and the most integral promotion of the human person.

Courage Under Fire is a series of talks about living a boldly for the faith. Focusing on contemporary issues and offering real-life application, the series addresses the challenges of Christian living in a secular society. Weekly presentations talk about evangelization and the call to share our faith.

Courage Under Fire: Topics

1. **Courage Under Fire: Caught in the Crosshairs**

Living a life of true discipleship is never easy. We often feel caught in the crosshairs when living a life of faith. What are the dangers that threaten us as Catholic Christians today? How do we respond with courage and conviction?

2. **Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept It**

Who, me, an evangelist? How each of us is called to carry out the mission work of the Church.

3. **Orders From Headquarters**

The Great Commission – to carry out the work that Jesus began. Why the Church exists (in order to evangelize) and how that looks in our world today

4. **Are You a Double Agent?**

Being a Catholic Christian is a 24 hour assignment. How we can become true disciples in our everyday lives

5. **Under the Radar**

Breaking the “Spiral of Silence” that prevents Catholics from being a vocal presence in all aspects of society

Courage Under Fire: Overview

1. Goals
 - a. To make faith relevant.
 - b. To develop committed Catholic Christians
 - c. To define Church as an active community of believers who are all about the mission.
2. Components
 - a. **Theme** – must be one that speaks to people and meets them where they are



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- b. **Presenters** from varied spiritual traditions who are gifted, engaging speakers.
- c. **Hospitality** - Spirit of inclusion that draws people in and keeps them coming
3. Design & Implementation
 - a. Dedicated employee to spearhead efforts
 - b. Listening to the hearts of the people and working as a committee is crucial for planning
 - c. Discernment! Where is God leading us this year? How can we work with God to accomplish HIS goals?
 - d. Maximize involvement from within the parish community and include resources from the Christian community at large
 - e. Use current communication methods to engage
4. Costs
 - a. \$5000
 - b. Marketing
 - c. Presenter Fees
 - d. Music
 - e. Travel
 - f. Hospitality
5. Evaluation
 - a. Create a "buzz". Make faith seem relevant and even interesting!
 - b. Provide exposure to faith topics in a very comfortable, non-threatening manner
 - c. Open door- anyone can come. Easy to invite someone. Spirit of welcome
 - d. Define the terms in ways that people can understand, embrace, and implement
 - e. Concise message with real-life application

Addendum:

We do not have a good, formal method of evaluation. Attendance numbers are a traditional method of determining "success" but I think we can agree that numbers do not indicate hearts that have been changed! Word of mouth over the years has been the best publicity for the series, but that is a difficult trend to quantify.

How do we take into account many of these outcomes:

- Two parishes have designed speaker series based on the Lenten series format
- One of our oldest parishioners tearfully explained that she thought she should be doing more to spread the word of God. Having learned more about evangelization at the speaker series, she realized that she is already evangelizing!
- A high school student who volunteered at the series last year enjoyed it so much that she contacted us about coming again this year - every week.
- The choir from Sacred Heart, who were initially reluctant to listen to Fr. John Schopfer, donated part of their performing stipend to Brady Faith Center.
- -Over \$2700 was donated over 5 weeks to charities designated by the speakers, strictly a free will offering and a vehicle for generosity.

In the end, what is the method for determining whether hearts have been changed? Without actions to evidence a change of heart or a conversion experience, how can we be sure our methods have been at all effective?