



Archdiocese
of Omaha

ONE CHURCH
ENCOUNTERING JESUS
EQUIPPING DISCIPLES
LIVING MERCY

presents

The
Thresholds
Game

Thresholds

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”

Matthew 28:19

Thank you for taking part!

The vision behind The Threshold Game is as simple as the game is to learn: Jesus’s mission to make disciples now falls to every individual missionary disciple and every community of disciples we call parishes. Recognizing how disciples are made can be difficult, even though the Church speaks at length regarding the process of conversion. It is our hope this game will help to identify and support that process.

This resource brings together the timeless wisdom of the church and the insights of modern day missionaries into one easy-to-use resource. It provides a framework for missionary disciples to understand what it truly means to, “meet someone where they are at...” It gives context for understanding where a wordless witness and a clear proclamation of the gospel fit into someone’s journey. It provides a picture of how deep catechetical formation and the equipping of disciples for their personal mission all fit within the larger process of evangelization.

The terminology used here is simple. The images are memorable. It tells practical stories with common themes. And it allows learners to lead themselves into a deeper understanding of evangelization – the game’s true strength. As they play the game and discuss as a group, their discoveries stick more than the most eloquent presentation ever could. Even more, they now have everything they need to repeat the experience with others within their sphere of influence (and maybe even grow that sphere further).

We hope this resource is a blessing for you and countless others. May God be glorified in his people.

In service to His word,
*The Parish Support Team
of the Archdiocese of Omaha*



Thresholds

"You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."

2 Timothy 2:1-2

We realize this is a process, and processes take time. Here is a loose guideline for how long this type of engagement should take. Don't feel you have to limit yourself to just these times, either! Just remember to take time for both group and personal reflection, as these conversations can often be weighty.

Time	Description
5 minutes	Welcome & Introductions
15 minutes	Group lectio (<i>we suggest Luke 5:1-11</i>)
5 minutes	Introduce the mission of the Church
5 minutes	Introduce the Thresholds of Conversion & Discipleship
5 minutes	Explain the LEFT SIDE Thresholds and the game instructions
10 minutes	Small groups play the game using LEFT SIDE personas only
10 minutes	Full group discussion of LEFT SIDE Thresholds
5 minutes	Reveal the LEFT SIDE answers and discuss additional comments
10 minutes	<i>Take a break - you've earned it!</i>
10 minutes	Present the necessity of preaching The Good News; pause & pray
5 minutes	Explain the RIGHT SIDE Thresholds and the game instructions
10 minutes	Small groups play the game using RIGHT SIDE personas only
10 minutes	Full group discussion of RIGHT SIDE Thresholds
5 minutes	Reveal the RIGHT SIDE answers and discuss additional comments
15 minutes	Pause & pray, then discuss the closing questions
Total Time: 2 hours, 5 minutes	



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Trust

A person has a positive association with Jesus or an individual Catholic and may begin asking questions out of passive curiosity.

Disposition:
Passive



Openness

A person admits to a general need or desire for personal spiritual change. This is not the same as a commitment to specific changes.



Seeking

A person moves from being passive to actively seeking to know the God who is calling him or her. The seeker is engaged in a spiritual quest.



Decision

The decision, in faith, to follow Jesus as an obedient disciple in the midst of the Church, which brings about new life.

Thresholds of Conversion and Discipleship



Beginning Disciple

A person has committed to following Jesus by turning away from sin, and makes any sacrifice in order to personally grow, and lives habits of the Christian life.

Disposition:
Active



Missionary Disciple

A person has decided to personally answer the call to take part in the mission of the Church by sharing the Good News.



Fruitful Disciple

A person is fully equipped for lifelong Catholic mission and makes any sacrifice to help another person to grow spiritually.



Kerygma

The Four “Rs” of the Core Gospel Message

1. God loves us and made us for **relationship** with him and others.
(John 3: 16)
2. Sin **ruins** our relationships and isolates us now and for eternity.
(Romans 6:23)
3. Jesus **restores** our relationship with God by his death and resurrection.
(Romans 5:8)
4. Our **response** to accept Jesus opens us to life eternal.
(Rev. 3:20)



“All forms of missionary activity are directed to this proclamation ... as the hinge on which all evangelization turns.”

—Pope John Paul II, *Mission of the Redeemer*
(44 emphasis added)

“Evangelization will always contain—as the foundation, center and at the same time the summit of its dynamism—a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ ... salvation is offered to all people, as a gift of God’s grace and mercy.”

—Pope Paul VI, *Evangelization in the Modern World*
(27 emphasis added)

Thresholds of Conversion and Discipleship

Left Side Personas:

Trust to Decision

1. Take turns reading out loud the LEFT-SIDE adults (*Laura to Robert*).
2. Discuss as a group where to put them on the map.
3. Write the person's name at a threshold.



Laura

Laura's husband Matt grew up Catholic, but walked away in college. Laura has internalized his negative experience and wants her kids to stay far away from the Catholic Church.



Charlie

Charlie grew up Catholic, but he no longer comes to Mass. He's not sure that his religious beliefs are relevant to his daily life, but he does have fond memories of coming to church now and again with his family.



Maria

Maria feels like she is on the brink of something new in her spiritual journey. She can't pinpoint it, but conversations with Catholics in a small group she attends have stirred up an intense longing in her heart to know God.



John

Everything John knows about Catholics comes from what he's heard on the news. There are a couple people at work who are Catholic, but they seem weird—not the kind of people he'd enjoy talking with.



Megan

One of Megan's friends leads her in prayer with the Bible. Megan hears the words of Scripture as God speaking directly to her. She is overwhelmed by the love of God for her and decides she will start following Jesus.



Paula

Paula has been through a difficult transition—she just got divorced and is dissatisfied with the direction her life is going. She decides to ask her Catholic friends for advice, because she has grown to respect them.



Robert

Robert is comfortable talking about religion and finds it an interesting discussion topic. So, when he heard some friends talking about Jesus at lunch, he asked them to share their favorite teachings of Jesus.

Thresholds of Conversion and Discipleship

Right Side Personas:

Beginning Disciple to Fruitful Disciple

1. Take turns reading out loud the RIGHT-SIDE adults (*Ana to Sonja*).
2. Discuss as a group where to put them on the map.
3. Write the person's name at a threshold.



Ana

Ana and her husband mentor young couples in marriage prep and help them to pray together. Now, they are coaching two of their mentees to go and do the same with others.



José

José recently attended a retreat weekend and encountered the love of God. Now he is filled with enthusiasm for the Lord and wants to make some positive changes in his relationships with his family members.



Adam

Adam is hungry to learn about all the teachings of the Church, because he is convinced that the Church teaches the fullness of truth. He comes to every faith formation opportunity that his parish offers.



Teresa

Teresa wants to help her grandchildren to understand the Good News, so she uses her irresistible Christmas cookies to tell them the nativity story.



Evan

A guy in Evan's Bible study wants to share the Gospel with a couple of his fishing buddies, but he's feeling nervous about it. Evan hates fishing, but he decides to cancel his weekend plans in order to tag along and help his friend.



Nic

Nic wants to evangelize his neighbors, so he invites them over for "beerble" study, where they drink beer together and discuss the big questions of life in the Bible.



Sonja

Sonja befriended one of her soccer teammates and modeled for her how to pray. Now, her teammate has accepted Jesus as the Lord and is taking RCIA, planning to enter the Church at Easter.

Thresholds

“If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 8:31

The Thresholds Game is not designed to stand alone, but rather, to be a part of a greater conversation. We encourage you to gather your parish leaders as a group, pray *Lectio Divina*, share the mission of the Church with one another, play the game, and reflect on the process as a whole. Shared prayer and active conversation builds trust with your parish leaders, and steering that conversation towards evangelization is a fundamental purpose of the game.

To help your group reflect on the experience, we’ve provided some sample questions to guide you along the Clear Path of Discipleship. Please build upon these as you gain experience in the Thresholds Game.

- Name your “Ah-ha” moments; what was something you learned or liked about the way the information was presented?
- Think of a story from your own life. How have you attempted to evangelize in the past? How will you evangelize going forward? How has someone walked with you?
- Which leaders came to mind throughout the day? To whom could you present this information next? Brainstorm a list of key leaders or parish ministries with your team.
- Where and when can you gather these potential disciples so your group can share what it has learned?
- Who from within your group can help you share this information? Do we need additional planning time? When can we act upon this? *We encourage you to set additional meeting times before the group adjourns.*
- Make a commitment: I will contact _____ by _____ about sharing the Thresholds of Conversion.
- For what changes do you hope by sharing this information with your parish? How might the Clear Path of Discipleship help your parish in the short term? In the long term?



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Thresholds of Conversion and Discipleship: Answer Key

The point of this exercise is NOT so much to get the right answer at it is to recognize the importance of attention to the where individuals are at in their journey of faith. You should *want* more information and feel the need to talk to them and hear more of their story. That is by design.

Left Side Personas:

Laura- She is *pre-trust* on the left side of trust. Someone must build trust with her.

Charlie- He is in *trust* based off his fond memories.

Maria- She is *seeking*. She has an intense desire to know God even if she does not know where to look.

John- He is *pre-trust*. Someone needs to help personally dispel the stereotypes that inhibit his journey.

Megan- She is in *decision*. A personal encounter with God is scripture moves her to decide.

Paula- She is in *openness*. Pain often opens our hearts to personal change.

Robert- He is in *trust*. His interest is not personal simply curiosity.

Right Side Personas:

Ana- She is a *fruitful disciple*. Her life is clearly bearing fruit in disciples who are themselves on mission.

Jose- He is a *beginning disciple*. He needs support and assistance with his faith journey.

Adam- He is a *beginning disciple*. His enthusiasm is personal and not yet for sharing with others.

Teresa- She is a *missionary disciple*. How will her clever efforts to share the faith bear fruit?

Evan- He is a *fruitful disciple*. He continues to sacrifice to help others grow.

Nic- He is a *missionary disciple*. What will be the outcome of Nic's efforts to share his faith?

Sonja- She is a *fruitful disciple*. Her witness has clearly changed her teammates life.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Do you know anyone like Paula who have open hearts because of personal challenges they have experienced? How can we be more present when people are experiencing challenges in life?
2. Have you ever witnessed someone make a decision for the Lord? How can we foster moments of encounter and conversion in the lives of people who are seeking?
3. Is Adam really the model parishioner? What might make the difference in Adam becoming a missionary disciple?
4. What kinds of sacrifices seem to be necessary to accompany individuals through thresholds of conversion?
5. What sacrifices are involved in accompanying individuals through thresholds of discipleship?