



Archdiocese
of Omaha

ONE CHURCH
ENCOUNTERING JESUS
EQUIPPING DISCIPLES
LIVING MERCY

The

Thresholds

of Conversion & Discipleship

“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*



“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	Content
5 MIN	Welcome & Introductions
10 MIN	Prayer
5 MIN	Introduce the Thresholds
10 MIN	Play the game
20 MIN	Process the game experience
20 MIN	Discuss: What do people need in order to grow?
5 MIN	Proclaim the Kerygma
5 MIN	Final comments

Total Time: 80 MIN



Thresholds of Conversion & Discipleship



Archdiocese of Omaha



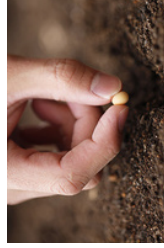
Pre-Trust

A person likely has no positive connection with an individual Catholic or the Church and might harbor suspicion or outright hostility toward Catholicism.



Trust

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



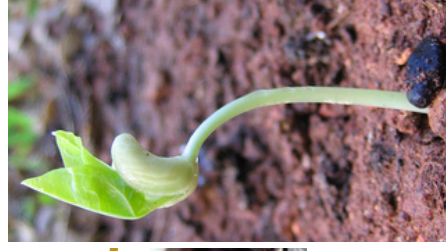
Openness

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.



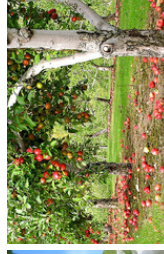
Beginning Disciple

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



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 equipped for mission and accompanies others sacrificially which bears the fruit of changed lives (seeing a person grow closer to Jesus).

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 relationship 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*)

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.

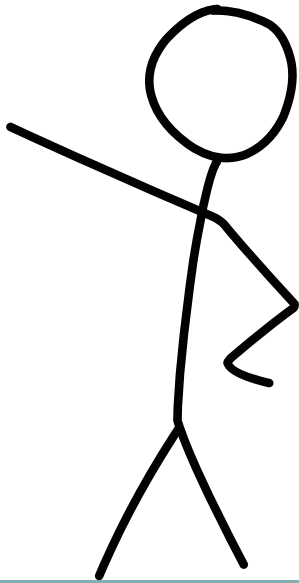
- Pope Paul VI, *Evangelization in the Modern World*, 27

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



Joe



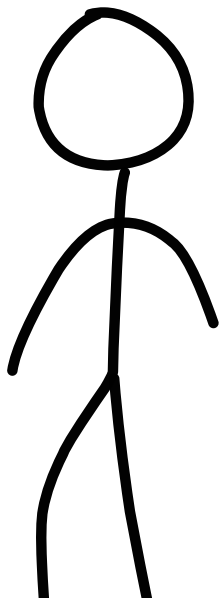
Joe is excited about living his Catholic faith. He comes to every faith formation opportunity his parish offers so he can keep learning about all the teachings of the Church and how he can live as a disciple of Jesus. He wishes everyone were Catholic!

Paul



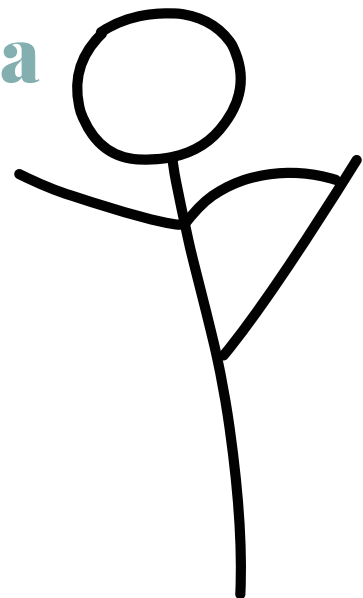
Paul has noticed how happy his wife Eva seems after she helps with retreats at the parish. He feels like something is missing from his life that might have to do with God. Paul was invited to a small group, and although he doesn't know what he is looking for, this felt like a good place to start.

Jordan



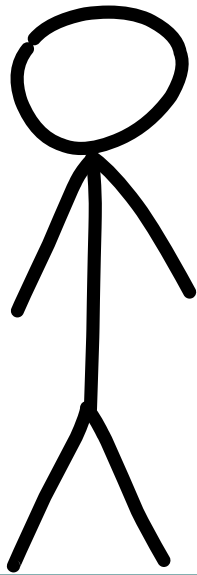
Jordan occasionally brings his family to Mass, but he does not feel any need for a deeper engagement with his faith. Jordan is grateful that the parish provides childcare at their annual casino night so it is easier to have quality time with his wife.

Andrea



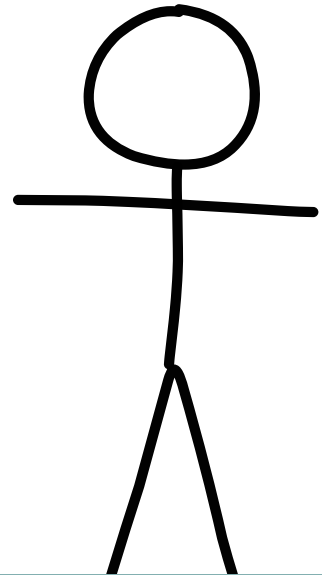
Andrea has often been described by others in her parish as a significant influence on their relationship with Jesus. She wants to help others share their faith too, so she gathers a group of disciples from her parish to pray for the people in their lives and to encourage one another to invest deeply and personally in the lives of those they pray for.

Sarah



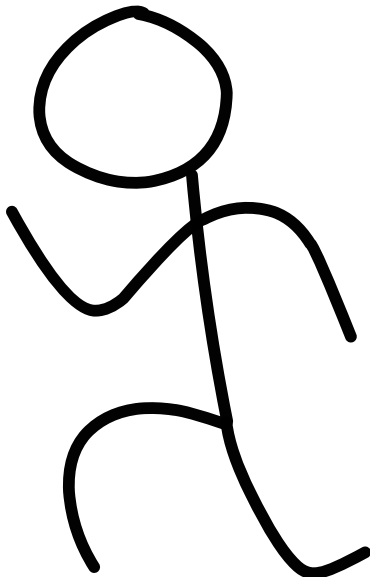
Sarah would say that she used to be Catholic. At one time she attended Mass regularly, but she stopped coming several years ago. She always felt like she didn't belong and that no one accepted her, so she is looking for community in other places.

Eva



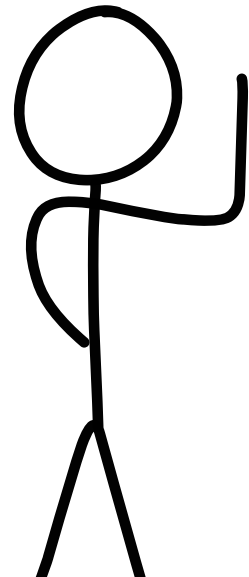
After helping with a parish retreat, Eva wants to help others experience a deeper relationship with Jesus, so she has started sharing her personal faith story in more conversations. After being encouraged by Andrea, she invited a friend to a retreat but she doesn't know how it went for her friend or how to help her next.

Mary



After a couple years of exploring the faith through Christian Initiation and meeting regularly with her mentor (Andrea), Mary has decided to become Catholic. She still has some difficulty living the Church's teachings, but she has come to trust Jesus and the Church he established.

Roberta



Roberta finally attended a parish retreat so her friend Eva would stop pestering her. On the retreat, the possibility of a relationship with Jesus became real and attractive in a way she had never anticipated. Now she has a list of important questions about Jesus that need answers before she can commit to following him.

What do People Need?



Sarah – Pre Trust

Sarah needs someone to befriend her and invite her into an experience of belonging within a loving Catholic community.



Jordan – Trust

Jordan needs someone to befriend him and ask questions that provoke his curiosity about Jesus.



Paul – Openness

Paul needs someone to give a clear witness to the difference that faith in Jesus makes.



Roberta – Seeking

Roberta needs someone who answers her questions and encourages her to make an act of faith in Jesus.



Mary – Decision

Mary needs someone to celebrate her decision and help her to continue growing in the basic habits of the Christian life.



Joe – Beginning Disciple

Joe needs someone to mentor him in the habits of a disciple and introduce him to the mission of the Church.



Eva – Missionary Disciple

Eva needs someone to teach her how to fruitfully share her faith.



Andrea – Fruitful Disciple

Andrea needs a community of other fruitful and missionary disciples who will continue to inspire and encourage her to evangelize using the method of Jesus.

What do People Need?

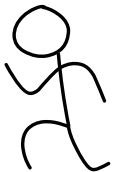
Discuss the characteristics of a ministry or event at your parish that you could invite Sarah, Paul, Mary, and Eva to that would help each of them take the next step in their relationship with Christ.



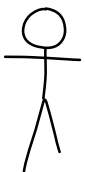
Sarah - Pre Trust



Paul - Openness



Mary - Decision



Eva - Missionary Disciple

“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.

Time	Content
5 MIN	Welcome & Introductions
10 MIN	Prayer
5 MIN	<p>Introduce the Thresholds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Church has written a lot on how people experience conversion and growth in discipleship. The Archdiocese of Omaha has taken those teachings and articulated them as the Thresholds of Conversion and Discipleship.• These thresholds do NOT refer to the outward appearance of commitment (i.e. number of parish committees or even weekly attendance at Mass). They refer to the depth of personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ.• As such, this activity should give meaning to “meet them where they’re at.”• Starting on the left [read the description under each threshold]

Time	Content
10 MIN	<p>Play the game</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the people at your table, read each persona and decide where the person belongs on the thresholds. • Write their name in the space provided below each threshold. • You will place someone in every threshold, including Decision • You have 10 minutes
20 MIN	<p>Process the game experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you notice when discussing each person? • Did you disagree on where to place people? • Where did you struggle? • What insights or epiphanies did you have from this exercise? <p>Key Takeaways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never accept a label in place of a story. You should want to know more about these people. • Taking the time to consider people's faith journey can be a new way of thinking. <p>Reveal Answers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Stands out to you? <p>Key Takeaways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in the early thresholds don't care how much you know. They want to know how much you care. • People in the later thresholds desire formation as a disciple and to be equipped for mission • The parish can provide contexts or "launching points" to help people grow <p>Personas to emphasize (if they have not already come up in discussion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roberta and Joe: Just because they show up doesn't mean they have made a decision.

Time	Content
20 MIN Cont'd	<p>Process the game experience Continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul needs someone to give a clear witness to the difference that faith in Jesus makes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What do we know about his small group? What would make it a fruitful experience for him? ◦ Versus Roberta is on a true spiritual quest. She needs someone who answers her questions and encourages her to make an act of faith in Jesus • Mary needs someone to celebrate her decision and help her to continue growing in the basic habits of the Christian Life • Eva needs someone to teach her the method of Jesus (deep investment in a few). How should she follow up with Roberta?
20 MIN	<p>Discuss: What do people need in order to grow? (Handout)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Sarah, Paul, Mary, and Eva • Everyone needs personal accompaniment • The parish can provide launching points (retreat, small groups, casino night) and a context for personal accompaniment to take place • At your table, complete the back portion of the worksheet. What are the characteristics of a ministry or event you could invite each person to that would help them take the next step in their relationship with Christ? (10 minutes) • Process together (10 minutes)
5 MIN	<p>Proclaim the Kerygma</p> <p>The Gospel needs to be explicitly proclaimed again and again to all God's people. You are encouraged to take a moment at some point to simply articulate the core message of the Gospel for those gathered. Do this whenever seems most natural.</p>
5 MIN	Final comments