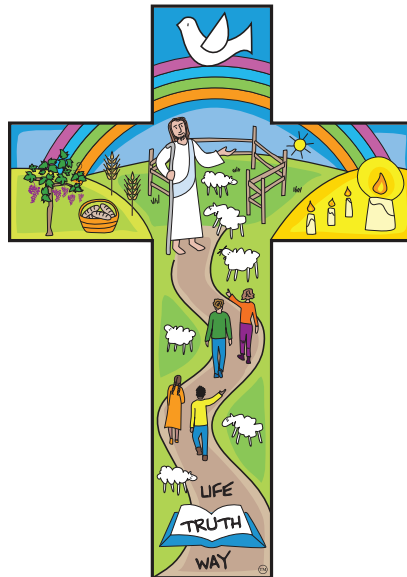


BIBLICAL MISSION FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

GOD'S WORD COMES TO LIFE
IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Manual for the Team
of Young Missioners



Instituto Fe y Vida
Biblical Team



www.YouthBiblicalMission.org (English version)
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Publications for the Implementation of the Mission

I. Core Team Manual

II. Manual for the Team of Young Missioners

III. Mission Guidebook

IV. Mission Journal



PROJECT DIRECTION

Instituto Fe y Vida

EDITORIAL TEAM

Project Coordinator and Main Writer

Amparo Leyman-Pino

Consultants

Eduardo Arnouil

María Pilar Cervantes

Justin J. Green

Ken Johnson-Mondragón

Dennis Kurtz

Leticia Medina

Walter F. Mena

Leonardo Monguí-Casas

Project Director and General Editor

Carmen María Cervantes

Editor of English Version

Ken Johnson-Mondragón

Translators

Leticia Medina

Ricardo Ortiz

Sylvia L. Sánchez

Copyeditors

Aurora Macías-Dewhirst

Justin J. Green

DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATIONS

OCUS Comunicación Visual

Alicia María Sánchez

Martha Elena Sánchez

Aranza Ruiz

Photos of Atrium Crosses

Jaime Lara

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Catholic.net, México

Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM)

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Letter to the Teams of Young Missioners,

Listen carefully to the words of the Lord, who invites you to share in his mission: "*Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature*" (Mk 16:15). Jesus has entrusted you with one of the noblest tasks of the Church: to be an ambassador for his message of liberating love and to bear witness to the conversion of those who receive it.

You have been chosen to share with other young people your experience of faith and friendship with Jesus. Trust that the Holy Spirit will come over you, enlighten you, and give you the strength and the words to carry out this important work.

Meditate deeply on the Word of God. Pray with all your heart, with all your strength, and with all your mind. Ask the Lord for the gifts you may need and to strengthen the gifts God has already given to you so generously. Prepare yourselves spiritually and intellectually for each task, study each session in detail, clear up your uncertainties, communicate with your fellow missioners, and prepare all the required materials.

Live the Biblical Mission intensely, both when you experience it for the first time and when you lead it for other young people. Welcome the message of Jesus with love and allow yourselves to be transformed by God's Word.

Jesus wants the Word to come to life in you, so that it may motivate you to act always in his name, for the sake of others. Add your own joy, enthusiasm, and commitment to the *state of mission* to which our bishops have called the whole Church.

Discover in the Church a place to be, to act, to speak, and to live in the manner of Jesus. Dare to walk by his side and you will come to know in your own life the love, peace, and joy of being a prophet of hope to those who seek, knowingly or unknowingly, the Lord of life.

May Mary be with you on your journey,

Instituto Fe y Vida Biblical Team

MISSION PRAYER

"GOD'S WORD COMES TO LIFE IN YOUNG PEOPLE"

Jesus, our friend, prophet, and teacher,
how great you are for desiring
God's Word to come to life in young people!

You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

You are the Way that guides our steps
to bring the Good News to those who long for God's love.

You are the Truth that feeds our spirit,
as we take part in making your Kingdom present in the world.

You are the Life that transforms our lives,
as your love becomes incarnate through the Word of God.

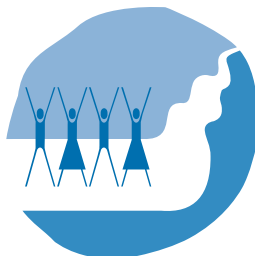
Jesus, our friend, prophet, and teacher,
how great you are for inviting us, so that
God's Word may come to life in young people!

We pray from the bottom of our hearts
for the success of this Biblical Mission.

We place before you, in a special way, all the young missionaries
and those who will participate in the biblical sessions.
May God's Word find a home in their hearts.

Enlighten them, strengthen them, and fill them with your Spirit,
so that, with Mary as their companion,
they may become your prophets, here and now,
and God's Word may come to life in young people.

Amen.



PROLOGUE

The Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults,
"God's Word Comes to Life in Young People,"
is a missionary project of the Catholic Church,
coupled with an evangelizing and formative effort
on the part of its young leaders.

It is carried out in the spirit of Jesus,
whose mission it was to announce the Good News
of the coming of the Kingdom of God to humankind.

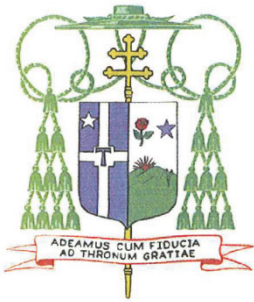
This mission was taken up by his first disciples,
and with the same strength yesterday, today, and forever,
Jesus continues to invite the baptized
to bring him as the Word of Life
to the ends of the earth in every generation.

Discovering and answering the personal call to mission
is the fruit of growth and maturity
as a follower of Jesus.

Once you agree to follow him,
life becomes a conversation and communion with him,
a conscious participation in his saving mission.

The Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults
brings young people to an encounter with Jesus,
getting to know him and accepting his invitation to love and serve others,
announcing with words and deeds "what we have heard,
what we have seen with our eyes" (1 Jn 1:1).





Office of the Archbishop

Archdiocese of San Antonio

P.O. Box 28410 • San Antonio, Texas 78228-0410

Phone (210) 734-2620

Fax (210) 734-0708

October 12, 2009

Dear Young People and Youth Ministers,

Filled with hope, I write this letter to encourage you to participate in the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People.” The Word of God has been, is, and always will be a fountain of true life for each person who receives it with an open heart.

The foundation on which we construct our Christian life ought to be a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, who is the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. Through Sacred Scripture, we come to know Jesus more deeply, and in this way, we can love Him more and give our lives to Him.

The Apostles had their lives transformed after their personal encounter with Christ: they started to live according to His teachings, having Jesus as the foundation and goal of all they did. Jesus became the center of their life, and the Word became the source that nurtured their ministry and impelled them to announce Him to the whole world.

I hope each one of you may have a similar experience. Jesus wants to encounter the youth of today, making Himself present among them through the testimony of young missionaries who live according to God’s Word and share it in community.

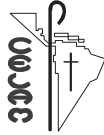
If you are a young person who knows that Jesus loves you, if you know Him well and consider Him your friend, you are invited to be a member of a Team of Young Missioners. If at this moment in your life you are in need of love or hope, or you feel sad and discouraged, Jesus invites you to participate in this Biblical Mission. He wants to be close to you, so that you may know Him better and experience the great love He has for you. He wants you to know Him as the one who reconciles and gives new life.

And to you, dear priest, ordained to be a good shepherd among the youth; dear youth minister; teacher of religion in a school; catechist in a parish; parent... Jesus invites you to organize this Biblical Mission. There are so many young people thirsting for God! Do not miss this great opportunity! It is urgent that “God’s Word come to life in young people,” and you can become one of the apostles who help to form young missionaries in our Church today.

I offer my prayers for all of you, and remain yours in Christ, prophet of hope among our youth,

+ José H. Gomez

Most Reverend Jose H. Gomez, S.T.D.
Archbishop of San Antonio, Texas
Chairman of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, USCCB
Moderator of the National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana – La RED



CONSEJO EPISCOPAL LATINOAMERICANO
DEPARTAMENTO DE FAMILIA Y VIDA
SECCIÓN JUVENTUD

January 6, 2010

Dear young people,

Jesus has a life-giving message for you. He is our best friend who never lets us down, who has words of new life and stands by our side, as long as we accept him in our life. All that is required is for each of you to be ready to meet him and hear his message, so that your life may have new energy and meaning in the midst of the many problems we face today.

When the Latin American Bishops gathered in Aparecida, Brazil in 2007, they called us to become authentic disciples and missionaries of the Lord of Life, and to carry out a Great Continental Mission in which we bring the Good News to our whole continent.

For this reason it is a joy to present to you the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults, "God's Word Comes to Life in Young People." It is a great gift from God and a source of much hope for the young, thanks to the thousands of young missionaries who will be taking action throughout our American Continent.

For those who suffer, who feel lost or lonely, who have given up on life... Jesus offers a gift of love and hope. It is a gift that will be poured out over you, a blessing that will seal you for life. This Biblical Mission is an opportunity to grow in faith, to get to know Jesus better, and to make friends who will accompany you on the journey through life. Believe me, it is a privilege to be the recipient of such a magnificent gift. Come and receive the gift of Jesus!

For those who feel a burning desire in their heart to be a light and support to their less fortunate peers, this Biblical Mission provides a beautiful opportunity to do so. Jesus is calling all young people who feel the urgency to be disciples and prophets of the reign of God, to continue his saving mission in this moment of history. With Jesus, you can help to create a better world. Come and take action!

Come with all of your dreams, with confidence that Jesus will find you on the way, and just like the disciples who walked with him on the road to Emmaus, he will explain the Scriptures to you and reveal his message of salvation. Come walk side-by-side with the Master, he is the way, the truth, and the life.

May you receive with this letter my heartfelt greeting and blessing,

Mons. Mariano José Parra Sandoval
Bishop of Guayana City, Venezuela
Bishop in Charge of the Office for Young People at CELAM

Carrera 5a. N° 118-31 (Usaquén) - Tel: (57 1) 587 9710 - Fax: 587 9717 - Apartado Aéreo 51086 - Bogotá, D.C. - Colombia
E-MAIL: familiaayvida@celam.org // familiaayvida@yahoo.es



During their Fifth General Conference in Aparecida, the Latin American bishops encouraged pastoral ministers, catechists, and youth and young adult ministers by affirming the multiple gifts that God has given young people for their own benefit, for the benefit of the Church, and for the benefit of society:

What [young adults and adolescents] fear is not sacrifice or giving up their own life, but rather a meaningless life. Because of their generosity, they are called to serve their brothers and sisters, especially the most needy, with their time and life. They are capable of standing up to the false illusions of happiness and the deceptive promises of drugs, pleasure, alcohol, and all forms of violence. In their search for the meaning of life, they are sensitive to, and capable of discovering, the particular call that the Lord Jesus issues to them. As missionary disciples, the new generations are called to transmit to their fellow young people without distinction, the current of life that comes from Christ, and to share it in community, building up the Church and society.¹



INTRODUCTION

The Lord's missionary mandate is ultimately grounded in the eternal love of the Most Holy Trinity: "The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father."

—Second Vatican Council, *Ad Gentes*

The Church's essential and primary mission is evangelization—to make Jesus known by sharing his life and his message at all times and places. Evangelization offers the opportunity to attain the new life given to us by Jesus through his Spirit, as he becomes incarnate in his followers and in the ecclesial community.

In this Biblical Mission, young people—adolescents and single young adults—gather around the Word as it is revealed in Sacred Scripture. Through God's Word they encounter Jesus, listen to his message, and are transformed as they allow the Word to become incarnate in their lives. As they gather in the name of Jesus, he offers them his great love and gives them new life. As he says, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18:20).

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb 13:8). Therefore, the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults, as it faithfully transmits the truths of the Gospel, is a project for today and for the future. It is also an instrument that ever brings to life the active presence of Jesus and the movement of the Holy Spirit.

THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BIBLICAL MISSION

General goals

1. To bring the Word of God to young people with new ardor, expressions, and methods.
2. To promote the evangelizing vocation of young Catholic leaders.
3. To create a sense of the universal Church among Catholic youth and young adults in the Americas.

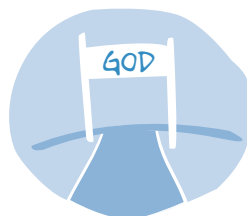


Objectives of the young evangelizers and hosts

1. To bring the Word of God in a meaningful way to thousands of young people in the Americas, with a bilingual and multicultural reach.
2. To become more aware of their personal vocation as evangelizers and become apostles to other young people in their own setting.
3. To grow in faith and enjoy a spirit of collaboration and fellowship with other young people throughout the Americas.
4. To learn a pastoral approach to peer evangelization, designed especially for youth and young adults, with all the necessary resources to be implemented by youth ministers, catechists, youth and young adult leaders, or parents.
5. To use their knowledge of Sacred Scripture and catechetical training to share the Word of God with other young people.

Objectives of the Biblical Mission for young Catholics as members of the Church

1. To answer the call of Pope John Paul II for a New Evangelization, in the spirit of the apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in America*.²
2. To answer the call of Pope Benedict XVI in his convocation of the Synod on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church, that “the Word of God be known, discerned, loved, and more profoundly grounded and lived in the Church.”³
3. To respond to the call of the V General Conference of the Bishops of Latin American and the Caribbean, Aparecida, in 2007, that the Catholic Church in Latin America should remain in an active and permanent state of mission.⁴
4. To implement the *Conclusions of the First National Encounter for Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry*, held in the United States,⁵ which asked for the creation of pastoral models of evangelization, and formation of leaders among young Latinos, and of *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*,⁶ which speaks of bringing adolescents to an encounter with Jesus.
5. To respond to the need for unity and diversity within the Church in the United States, with a bilingual missionary effort designed to include young people from all cultural backgrounds.
6. To promote the harmonious collaboration of arch/dioceses, parishes, pastoral institutes, religious congregations, national organizations, and apostolic movements, as promoters and facilitators of the Biblical Mission.



ORGANIZATION AND UTILIZATION OF THE *MANUAL*

This *Manual* offers young missionaries the pastoral-theological framework, the methodological guidelines, and the practical input needed to prepare and carry out their individual functions within the Biblical Mission. It is organized in three parts:

Part 1: *Mística* of the Biblical Mission

The first part emphasizes the evangelizing mission of the Church and points out the importance of the Biblical Mission, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People,” for the New Evangelization of the Americas. It also presents the pastoral-theological framework of this project and situates the young missionaries as the protagonists of the Biblical Mission.

The *mística* is a vital aspect of the Biblical Mission, since it communicates its spirituality in many ways and is the source from which the missionary project is born:

The word *mística* refers to a set of ideals, attitudes, values, and feelings that motivate and guide people or communities in their faith journey, inspiring their response to God, and generating a spirituality that animates their lives and pastoral ministry. It comes out of a deeply spiritual experience, founded on prayerful reflection about our shared call to ministry and mission as members of the Body of Christ, the Church.

The Mission Cross and its symbols, the theme song, the videos produced in Spanish, and the images and materials utilized in the four sessions all help to generate the *mística* of the Biblical Mission project. Nevertheless, it is the young people—with their enthusiasm, love for Jesus, apostolic zeal, interest in seeing God’s Word come to life, and desire to bring the Good News to their peers—who give the Biblical Mission a prophetic, youthful *mística* that is capable of generating faith in Jesus and his message of salvation.⁷

Part 2: Being a Young Missioner

The second part begins by presenting the Pastoral Circle as the overarching methodology of the Biblical Mission. It goes on to point out the importance of shared leadership in order to build community, talks about the evangelizing task of today’s youth, and reviews the process of growth and development in young Christians.

Part 3: Carrying Out the Biblical Mission

This part of the *Manual* introduces the three stages for implementing the Biblical Mission. It also provides an overview of the *Manuals*, *Guidebook*, and *Journal*, highlights the formation-in-action process for the young missionaries, and provides instructions for them to prepare for the Training Day and to facilitate the biblical sessions. Finally, it offers practical suggestions for effectively managing the biblical sessions and gives guidelines for the celebration of the Sending Forth and Closing Liturgies.



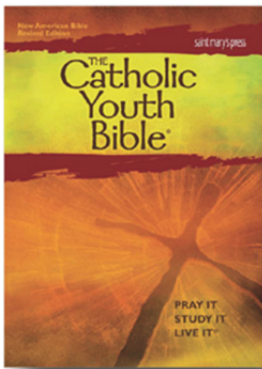
This *Manual* is the second publication that the young missionaries will utilize. The first is the *Mission Journal*, in which they will have written their personal reflections during the Experience of the Biblical Mission. At the end of this experience, the young missionaries receive this *Manual*, along with the *Mission Guidebook*, for their review before the Training Day.

The *Guidebook* presents the process, contents, and activities for each session of the Biblical Mission in detail, indicating the tasks to be performed by the evangelizers and hosts. It is an indispensable tool for the preparation of the biblical sessions and a detailed guide to carrying them out.

The overall purpose of this *Manual* is to assist with the preparation of the Teams of Young Missioners. The themes and content are designed to generate questions, impart knowledge and, above all, help to foster the *mística* of the Biblical Mission.

THE CATHOLIC YOUTH BIBLE AND ITS USE IN THE BIBLICAL MISSION

*The Catholic Youth Bible*⁸ (CYB) is the preferred text for biblical pastoral ministry among youth and young adults in the English language. It was written with young people in mind so they can “Pray it, study it, and live it.” The CYB provides cultural connections to the Bible, valuable introductions to the major sections and each book of the Bible, as well as a series of didactic and pastoral tools. These will enable young people to share the Good News more readily with their peers.



The Catholic Youth Bible as the tool of choice for the young missionaries

Since the young missionaries must get closer to the Word of God in order to pray with it, become familiar with its message, and live it, the ideal is that all of the young missionaries would have a copy of the CYB. This version of the Bible will also become quite useful to them in their ongoing mission to evangelize their peers.

The text of the New American Bible, Revised Edition or the Catholic Youth Bible: official text of the Biblical Mission

The CYB uses the text of the *New American Bible, Revised Edition*, due to its biblical quality and accessible language for young people. So that all of the participants in the Biblical Mission may read the same version of the biblical text, the passages that are used for each session are transcribed in the *Mission Guidebook* and *Journal*. It is recommended to enthrone this Bible at each Biblical Mission site during the first session and keep it in a prominent location throughout the Biblical Mission.

PART 1

MÍSTICA OF THE BIBLICAL MISSION

There is a need for young people who will allow God's love to burn within them and who will respond generously to his urgent call... I assure you that the Spirit of Jesus today is inviting you, young people, to be bearers of the good news of Jesus to your contemporaries.

—Benedict XVI, XXIII World Youth Day

1.1 THE BIBLICAL MISSION AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

The Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People,” is grounded in the main task of the Church: the evangelization of the world—in this case, carried out *by, with, and for* young people, *from their lived reality*. It operates from the perspective of the New Evangelization of the Americas and utilizes Sacred Scripture as a source for the encounter with Jesus and his Good News of salvation.

Jesus wants the Word of God to come to life in young people

John’s Gospel begins by stating that God’s Word has existed from the beginning of time, and that the Word *is* God. Recalling the story of the creation of the universe and of humanity—which shows the power of God’s Word and the greatness of his creation—John says that this Word is a source of life and light for all people (Jn 1:1-5).

Then, referring to Jesus, he writes that the Word of God became human and filled us with his light. To those who accepted him, he gave power to become sons and daughters of God, because when they receive him into their lives, they are born of God and become witnesses of his glory (vv. 9-14).

The incarnation of Jesus in history, which began through his Mother Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, continues in us today when we join with other Christians to make Jesus present in our own environment. This happens to the extent that we allow our lives, actions, and words to flow from the active presence of the Holy Spirit within us.

In a similar way to Jesus—who came into the world to establish the Kingdom of God with new life—we Christians have been entrusted with the mission to be a fountain of light and new life for others. We received this mission in baptism and it remains with us throughout life; from childhood on, we are called to carry it out using the gifts we are given at every age and stage of our lives.



When we reach adolescence and young adulthood, our Christian mission expands to new horizons, given our greater capacity to spread the Kingdom of God, particularly within our own age group. Because of this, the Church insists over and over that young people are the best evangelizers of their peers: they are called by Jesus to bring the Word of God to life in their own setting. Thus, the pastoral project of the Biblical Mission promotes the protagonism of young missionaries, so that their evangelizing efforts may be carried out *by, with, and for* young people, *from their lived reality*:

By young people, which presupposes an invitation and gathering to receive training and get organized to bring the Word of God to their peers. This is achieved through a formation-in-action process, in which young adults who exhibit human maturity, solid formation, and pastoral experience, serve as role models and advisers for their peers by becoming members of the Core Team.

With young people, which implies that the adult leadership—organized as a Core Team—guides and supports the young missionaries to be the protagonists of the missionary project. The adults must truly believe in their young leaders, advising them and accompanying them as they recognize and put their protagonism into practice.

For young people, which is the main goal of the Biblical Mission—it seeks to reach thousands of young people throughout the continent, bringing the life-giving Word of God and making it come to life in them. Their anguish will become peace; their isolation will transform into community; their apathy will become strength from the Holy Spirit; and their confusion will turn into a sure path to eternal love with the Father.

From the lived reality of young people, which means taking into consideration their personal, communal, and social reality as a starting point for ministry, reflecting on it in the light of God’s Word. This approach is achieved through the methodology of the biblical sessions, which invites young people to bring their personal experience into every reflection, discussion, and prayer.

The Mystical Body of Christ in action

When we are born as sons and daughters of God through baptism, our lives are united to Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to the extent that we can say with St. Paul, “I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20). Yet each one of us remains an imperfect image of Jesus; thus, Paul speaks of the whole ecclesial community as forming the Body of Christ, with every member fulfilling a different function. Because we are united in communion with one another, we become the living presence of Jesus, acting throughout history (1 Cor 12:12-31).

In the Biblical Mission, there are many roles that bring the presence of Christ to the participants. In other words, in order for God’s Word to come to life in young people, it is necessary to form teams capable of acting in the spirit and manner of Jesus:

- *Evangelizers* are needed who take on the threefold mission of Jesus as priest, prophet, and servant-king. By inviting the young participants to center their hearts on God in sincere and profound prayer, they exercise their priestly mission, becoming bridges between God and humanity. By proclaiming the



Good News of salvation to their peers, they carry out their prophetic mission. By creating a communal spirit of mutual service and care, they realize their mission as servant-kings, guiding the community with Jesus' style of leadership.

- *Hosts* are needed who will receive the young people in the name of Jesus, give them a friendly welcome, and accept them with love. The meeting room should evoke the warmth with which Jesus received all who approached him. When preparing the materials for the room, the Bible should be placed on an altar so that the young participants may be nourished by the Word of God.
- A group of adults is needed to organize, train, and accompany the young missionaries. The *organizing leader* gathers members of the ecclesial community to become Jesus' apostles as members of the *Core Team*. Some of them will also serve as *trainers* and *advisers* who identify themselves with Jesus the Teacher, ready and willing to train and accompany the young missionaries.
- The Biblical Mission also needs people who will *take on the role of Jesus at prayer*. Young people who were invited to serve as young missionaries but were not able or willing to become an evangelizer or host should be asked to fulfill this ministry instead. This task may also be carried out by members of the young missionaries' own ecclesial community, starting at the Sending Forth Liturgy.

The fruitfulness of the Biblical Mission depends on the coordination, shared leadership, and prayer of this small part of the Mystical Body of Christ. Because it is a mission for young people, the protagonists or leading actors are the young missionaries themselves, organized into teams of four—two evangelizers and two hosts—who make Jesus present as prophet and friend among the young participants.



The evangelizers and hosts are the foremost Christ-bearers to the young people in the Biblical Mission. Moved by their love, they are empowered to bring Jesus to others. The young participants will see that love in action and thereby begin to see the face of God. It is the same love that will make God's Word come to life in them.

Jesus often used the image of the sower to communicate how we are to receive the new life that he wants to give us. Following this image, the young hosts prepare the soil by inviting young people to participate in the Biblical Mission, organizing the materials for each session, and creating a communal spirit among the participants. Thanks to their labor, the seeds of the Gospel, sown by the evangelizers through the proclamation of the Word and the moments of prayer and reflection, will find the fertile soil required to sprout, grow, and bear fruit in their hearts.

In order for the young missionaries to fully understand the Biblical Mission process, the Core Team will facilitate for them the same biblical sessions they will later conduct for their peers. At the end of their "Experience of the Biblical Mission," they will prayerfully discern whether God is calling them to serve as evangelizers or as hosts, followed by a solemn rite of commitment in which they will recite together the following prayer:

COMMITMENT PRAYER FOR EVANGELIZERS AND HOSTS

Thank you, Jesus, for inviting me
to serve in a Team of Young Missioners,
so that God's Word may come to life in young people.

I am answering your call,
as an evangelizer or a host in this Biblical Mission,
in order to make you present through my actions.

I make the commitment to receive training
so that I may carry out the four biblical sessions
in a spirit of humility as your missionary disciple.

Please bless my commitment
and send your Spirit to enlighten me,
giving me the strength I need to fulfill my role!

Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother,
your saying "yes" to God brought about
the incarnation of your divine Son in human history.
Walk with me during this Biblical Mission,
and pray that the Holy Spirit may act in and through me,
so that God's Word may come to life in young people today. Amen.

The evangelizing mission of the Church

The essential task of the Church is to evangelize, proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and the arrival of the Kingdom of God in human history. It is up to the followers of Jesus—whether adults, young adults, adolescents, or children—to bring other people to God, utilizing personal gifts in accordance with personal maturity level. At its heart, this mission involves getting to know Jesus and responding in love to his unconditional love, allowing ourselves to be moved by the Holy Spirit, and experiencing the fruits of the Kingdom of God while journeying to eternal life with the Father.

The foundational content of Church’s mission is the Word of God as revealed in Sacred Scripture. It also takes into consideration the Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church, so that God’s Word may be incarnated in the general human context and in the concrete situation of the people participating in the missionary effort.

The Church is born out of the mission of Jesus, who himself is the Gospel of God, who has been sent to deliver the Good News of the Kingdom to all generations, until the end of time. Evangelization brings forth the wisdom and loving commitment of God, and it can elicit faith in Jesus Christ, in all times, cultures, and places. As Saint Paul explains, God needs us to spread the message of Jesus (Rom 10:14-17).

God speaks at all times and in every age: yesterday, today, and forever. God is in constant communication with us; the Word is offered fresh in every generation, spoken in a way that responds to the contemporary situation. The mission of the Church is to transmit this Word to all people, in all times and places, according to the mandate of Jesus, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19). This has happened throughout history and will continue to take place, with vitality and fruitfulness, amid the challenges and obstacles of every time and place.

Christ is the only path to salvation, and it is only by knowing him and falling in love with him that young people can journey with him every day. Ensuring that the Good News is proclaimed from young person to young person deserves the Church’s time and energy, and some may even be called to devote their lives to that ministry.

A mission like the Biblical Mission is designed to be carried out at a specific time and place. It is an opportunity to gather the faith community around the Word, strengthening it to send its members to their young brothers and sisters who want to know Jesus better, or who have strayed away from God. This is an urgent need among young people of today, who are hungry for the nourishment Sacred Scripture offers.

The Good News of Jesus is for every generation of Christians; the teachings of Jesus and the mystery of salvation are a source of fullness of life in every circumstance. As an instrument of evangelization, biblical missions are timeless and always up to date, since they are nurtured by the life-giving Word of God.

In order for God’s Word to come to life in young people, the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults is focused on Jesus and his message of salvation. The first Biblical Mission is centered on seven symbolic names that Jesus gave to himself, thereby revealing his identity, showing us the Father, and explaining his saving mission, according to the Gospel of John.



When he revealed his identity by saying “I am,” Jesus was asserting that he is God, that in him the promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled. This was the way God introduced himself to Moses: “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob” (Ex 3:6); it is the name God used when revealing himself to his people through Moses: “I am who am”(v. 14). When young people meet Jesus through these symbolic names, they have a personal encounter with him, they get to know him better, and they open themselves to his liberating love. Then, they can begin to identify with him, and strengthen their vocation and mission as Christians.

Subsequent Biblical Missions prepared by Instituto Fe y Vida will offer different perspectives on Jesus and his mission. In this way, through Jesus, young people may experience the active presence of the Holy Spirit and their communion as sons and daughters of the Father, preparing them to carry out their baptismal vocation.

The contribution of the Biblical Mission to the New Evangelization in the Americas

The New Evangelization of the Americas is the Catholic Church’s response to the challenges and hopes of peoples possessing a great tradition of faith, yet an increasing gap between faith and life, as well as a noticeable lessening of their relationship with God due to pervasive secularism. We are in a *kairos* moment, a time of grace, to listen to the Gospel and apply its insights to the realities of our time. The one and only Gospel—the Good News about Jesus and the Kingdom of God—echoes in the hearts of those who listen to it and share its message with new ardor, expressions, and methods.

Pope John Paul II, when he called for the New Evangelization of the Americas, saw it as a dynamic force: an urgent call to conversion and hope. The purpose of this new evangelizing effort is to stimulate personal attachment to Jesus Christ and his Church by the renewing power of the Word of God. This is accomplished thanks to the movement of the Holy Spirit, which creates unity in diversity, nurtures the charismatic and ministerial richness of the ecclesial community, and extends to the whole world through the missionary commitment of the faithful.⁹

The Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People,” is framed by this spirit, bringing forth the features of the New Evangelization promulgated by John Paul II, and responding to them with a missionary plan for the young Church. Its goal is to bring the Word of God to every corner of the Americas by promoting the baptismal call to evangelize among young leaders and by giving young Catholics a taste of what it means to belong to the universal Church.

This evangelizing project is to be carried out *by, with, and for* young people, *from their lived reality*, in two complementary dimensions:

- The continuous and progressive evangelization of young people who are already active in the Church.
- An opportunity to evangelize the young people who are not actively participating in the life of the Church.

To evangelize means to “go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel.”¹⁰ It involves bringing Jesus and his message to the places where young people live, and transforming and renewing those places from within. Pope Francis’s Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* states that:

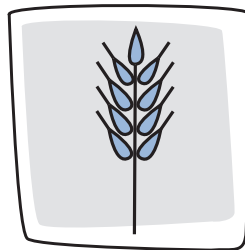
The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast.¹¹

The earlier encyclical of Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, points out that evangelization is a dynamic process of various complementary and mutually enriching elements that call us to conversion and to a new life in Jesus Christ. They also usher us into communion with the Father, making us the sons and daughters of God and brothers and sisters to each other, as well as promoting justice, forgiveness, and peace, which are fruits of the Holy Spirit,¹² the foundation of every authentic human society.

The Mission Cross and its relationship to Latin American atrial crosses

Each young missionary will receive a small Mission Cross as a sign of his or her calling and commitment. A larger cross will be enthroned in each Biblical Mission site, as a tribute to the atrial crosses of the first evangelization of the Americas. These crosses, carved in stone and richly decorated with multiple symbols, had three characteristics:

- **Prominent location.** They were placed at the center of the atrium, the organizing symbol of Christian life marking the entryway into sacred space, as shown in the pictures on the next page. They were a sign of the missionary effort to center Christian communities on the person of Jesus and his teachings.
- **Religious symbolism.** They had evangelizing and catechetical functions, as the symbols formed on them explained various aspects of the faith, with particular attention to the paschal mystery. The missionaries and catechists used those symbols to encourage people to follow Jesus and to teach the truths of the faith.
- **Incarnate in the culture.** They were carved with the artistic sensitivity of the indigenous people who created them. The stone engravings and decorations reflected the incarnation of the Gospel message in the local culture.





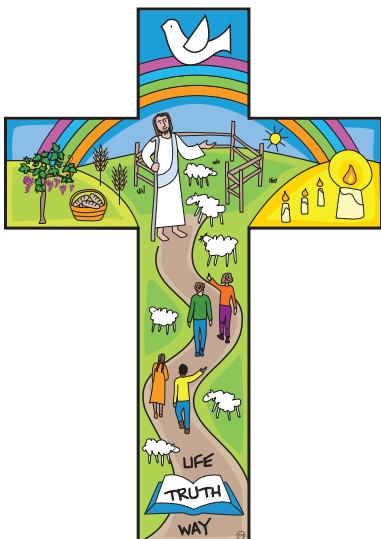
**HUICHAPAN PARISH
HIDALGO, MÉXICO**



**YECAPIXTLA PARISH
MORELOS, MÉXICO**

Similarly, the Mission Cross—to be enthroned at each Biblical Mission site—will identify the site as a sacred place of encounter with God’s Word. This Cross is decorated with symbols designed to help young people get to know Jesus better, presenting him to them in a familiar, intimate, and joyful manner so that they can relate to Jesus as a friend, a prophet, and a reliable guide for their journey through life.

In the First Biblical Mission, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People,” the Mission Cross depicts the seven symbolic names Jesus used to reveal his identity, according to John’s Gospel. These statements are presented to young people with the same warmth Jesus had when he explained to his disciples who he is and why he came into the world. He begins each statement with “I am” in order to convey his unique love to the young people, as well as the meaning of his incarnation in human history:



- I am the vine (Jn 15:5)
- I am the bread of life (Jn 6:35)
- I am the way and the truth and the life (Jn 14:6)
- I am the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25)
- I am the gate for the sheep (Jn 10:7)
- I am the good shepherd (Jn 10:11)
- I am the light of the world (Jn 8:12)

With these seven simple, deep, and richly meaningful messages, Jesus reveals himself to his disciples of every time and place as Savior, Messiah, Lord, spiritual nourishment, and giver of life. In each “I am” from Jesus we receive the promises of the Kingdom; we hear his invitation to follow him as disciples and apostles; we visualize the commitments involved in being a Christian, both in our daily lives and in critical moments throughout life.

Today Jesus continues to introduce himself by saying: “I am.” In doing this he starts a conversation with young people who, listening to him in a spirit of confidence and prayer, respond to the Lord’s voice with their hearts and actions.

The symbols incorporated into the Mission Cross will change in subsequent missions to reflect their particular themes, serving as an emblem of the Biblical Mission, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People.” As the Cross is enthroned in each Biblical Mission site, Jesus becomes the center of the life and faith of the young people participating in it. He takes his place as their true spiritual sustenance, the only one who has the words of eternal life.

The missionaries will wear around their neck, close to their heart, the Cross that is given to them in the Rite of Sending Forth. It is a reminder that they have been called by Jesus himself to bring his message to other young people. It is also a sign of the commitment they have made, in full awareness that Jesus gives them strength for their missionary journey, through the Spirit that dwells in them.

Young people as bearers of the Word of God in the New Evangelization

Pope John Paul II firmly believed that “young people are a great force in society and for evangelization. They represent quite a large part of the population in many nations of America. On their encounter with the living Christ depends the hope and expectation of a future of greater communion and solidarity for the Church and society in America.”¹³

The Church has always trusted in young people and in their ability to discover their vocation to be friends and disciples of Jesus, his apostles to their generation. They are called to serve their brothers and sisters—to invest their energy, their time, and their lives to bring the Good News of Jesus to those who, whether they know it or not, yearn for a new life, especially among the most needy.

Through their actions, convictions, and lifestyle, young people make Jesus and gospel values present among their peers. On its own, this testimony constitutes a silent, clear, and effective proclamation of Jesus’ Good News that comes to life when they share his love and generosity, offer understanding and welcome to their neighbor, show admiration for everything that is noble and good in the world, and foster faith and hope. Jesus’ Good News is the only thing capable of filling the spiritual emptiness of a society marked by individualism, materialism, consumerism, and hedonism (seeking pleasure as the goal of life). For their part, young members of the Church—aware of their evangelizing mission, and with theological and pastoral preparation—are sent out as apostles among their peers. Investing their talents, time, and efforts as prophets of hope, they become a sign of unity in the faith and instruments of fraternal communion

in a pluralistic world, generating communities in which the vocation to build the Kingdom of God is nurtured.

This active young Church, with its idealism, energy, and creativity, is entrusted with proclaiming the one and only Gospel with *new ardor, expressions, and methods*—the three characteristics of the New Evangelization.

Its new ardor is seen in the personal integrity, holiness of life, and prophetic missionary spirit of many young people. It is also visible in their awareness that they are a force for renewal in the Church, as well as in their willingness to express their joy and share their gifts. It is felt in the intensity of their prayer and their readiness to evangelize other young people, serve the needy, and advocate for justice.

Its new expressions allow the Gospel to be brought to other young people in ways that are meaningful to them. In terms of discipleship, there are groups and small communities of young people who pray, study, reflect, or do apostolic and social outreach together. The mass media and conferences with peer testimonies and religious music stand out as useful ways to evangelize large groups. By their participation in popular religious celebrations, young people bring gospel values to life in the culture.

Its new methods “incarnate the Word of God in the lives of young people. They are based on an encounter with the living Jesus and the life-giving movement of the Holy Spirit. They are supported by a critical analysis of lived experience in light of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. They lead to effective pastoral practices that come from the young people themselves. They promote the discovery, development, and use of each young person’s gifts in service to the community, as they become salt, light, and yeast in their own environment.”¹⁴

In order to become agents of the New Evangelization, young people need to live their discipleship in community and experience there the first fruits of the Kingdom—becoming seeds, hidden pearls, light, yeast, and salt, as proclaimed by Jesus in his parables about the Kingdom of God:

- *Seeds* that generate life—seeds that spring forth from the Gospel and require care and nourishment in order to grow and bear fruit.
- *Hidden pearls* in their homes, neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, groups, sports, and shopping centers—pearls that need to be appreciated and helped to discover their own value in order to make the Kingdom a reality.
- *Light* that dispels the darkness when they offer help, support, advice, friendship, forgiveness, solidarity, and love—light that needs to be constantly shine through the Word of God in order to better reflect the love of God to humanity.
- *Yeast* that permeates the social environments in which the young people live—yeast that needs the power of the Holy Spirit to transform those environments in such a way that they may become sources of life for other young people.
- *Salt* that can season the lives of other young people with God’s love—salt that first needs to discover this liberating love personally in order to grasp the Christian meaning of life and share it with others.

From the encounter with Jesus is born a desire to deepen that relationship and a willingness to follow the way of life he proposes. This means fully embracing the Kingdom and accepting the new way of being, thinking, living, and acting that the Gospel requires. Those who have been evangelized in this way feel impelled to evangelize others in turn. That is the proof of authenticity of their conversion to Jesus and the main reason for which the Church continues to exist and constantly renews itself, despite the limitations and weaknesses of its members. Every young person who truly receives God’s Word and commits to work for the building of the Kingdom, becomes a herald and a witness of the One who has transformed his or her life.

1.2 PASTORAL-THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE BIBLICAL MISSION

The Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults accomplishes the Church’s task of being a witness and prophet of the Kingdom of God, which means continuing to do what Jesus did, to say what he said, and to live the lifestyle that he lived (1Jn 2:6). The Biblical Mission’s motto, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People,” centers this task of the Church on youth and young adults, highlighting how important it is for the Word of God to come to life in the young Church, which then takes it everywhere.

Jesus urges his disciples to evangelize

After his resurrection and before ascending into heaven, Jesus appeared to his disciples—women and men alike—on various occasions. He sought them out to tell them that he was entrusting his mission to them and that the Holy Spirit would give them the strength to carry it out (Mt 28; Mk 16; Lk 24; Jn 20; Acts 1:3-8).

Jesus seeks out two disciples on their way to Emmaus, explaining the Scriptures to them so that they may understand why the Messiah had to suffer, and revealing himself in the breaking of the bread (Lk 24:13-35). On other occasions, Jesus fishes and eats with his disciples (Lk 24:39-50; Jn 21); he promises to send them the Consoler, “the promise of my Father” (Lk 24:49); and Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit upon them (Jn 20:22). Finally, he sends out his disciples, telling them to go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature; to baptize them, consecrating them to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and to accompany their words with signs of new life (Mk 16:15-18; Mt 28:19).

On the day of Pentecost, when the disciples “were all filled with the holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4), they realized that Jesus was “the Lord” and they started understanding his teachings in a deeper way. Their lives took on a new meaning and they had the strength and courage to go out and proclaim to every corner of the earth that Jesus is the Messiah who came into the world to give life in abundance.

Jesus—the incarnate Word of God—is alive and active today through the Holy Spirit present in his Mystical Body, the Church. The Word of God renews everyone who receives it, penetrating into the deepest parts of our being and enlightening us so that



we may see our lives through the eyes of Jesus. The Word is effective, alive, and life-giving; it has power to save and to liberate; it is revealing and probing. Jesus entrusted his disciples with the proclamation and transmission of the Word, and no one can remain indifferent to this mission.

The young disciples of today, with the Word of God as their foundation, are motivated to bring the Good News of salvation to their brothers and sisters. Discipleship and mission are two sides of the same coin: when the disciple is in love with Jesus, she or he cannot stop announcing to the world that salvation comes from Jesus. The disciple knows by faith that only with Christ is there light, hope, and love.

In baptism we are called to continue Jesus' mission as priest, prophet, and servant-king. The new life in Christ Jesus acquired through baptism frees us from sin and incorporates us into the community of his disciples. We are members of his body active in history, he being the head. For his disciples, following the Master is intimately linked with the mission of Jesus, because they are called to make known to others Jesus' gift of salvation to all humankind when he offered his life for us to the Father.¹⁵

God has called young people to be his prophets since Old Testament times

God has called and entrusted many young people with the mission of being a prophet, starting shortly after establishing the covenant with Abraham. After hearing God's call, they agreed to take part in the plan of salvation.

Receiving a prophetic vocation from God usually involves the following process between God and the person:

- God initiates the relationship, inviting the person to become a prophet and entrusting him or her with a mission.
- The person acknowledges her or his sins and the sins of the people. Most of the prophets also protest that they are not suitable for the mission, and they do not dare to accept it.
- God rejects their negative response and strengthens them to become prophets.

A brief overview of salvation history shows how God counted on youth and young adults to build up the faith of the chosen people. They serve as an inspiration for young people today, who are invited to listen to the voice of God and follow Jesus.

Isaac, "the son of the promise," trusted fully in his father Abraham, to the point of placing his own life into his hands (Gn 22:1-18). The Lord rewarded his faith and his readiness, and through him God's promise to Abraham that he would have countless descendants came true.

Joshua, captain of the Israelite army in the first battle against the Amalekites (Ex 17:8-15), became the assistant to Moses, who prepared him to lead the people into the Promised Land, as the Lord commanded. Moses changed Hoshea's name to *Joshua*, which means "God saves" (Nm 13:16); he then named him as his successor and presented him officially to the community (Dt 31:1-8).



Samuel was still a boy when God called him to entrust him with a mission. At first it wasn't easy for Samuel to identify the origin of the call, but thanks to the wisdom of his master Eli, he discovered that the voice came from God and he prepared himself to answer with openness: "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening" (1 Sm 3:9).

David, a young shepherd, was anointed as king by Samuel, following God's command (1 Sm 16:1-13). In David's fight against Goliath (1 Sm 17:4-50), God showed how he protects the lives of young people who risk their lives in defense of the chosen people. From a human perspective, David's victory was the triumph of a weak person over a powerful one; in God's eyes, it was the victory of one who trusted in God and took seriously the commitment to serve the Lord. David was a man after God's own heart (1 Sm 13:14). He wrote many psalms of praise to God; he asked God for forgiveness when he disobeyed the law; and he carried out his mission of uniting the twelve tribes of Israel into one people, establishing it as a kingdom.

Josiah assumed his role as King of Judah when he was only eight years old. About ten years later, God gave him the task of undertaking a vigorous social and religious reform to help the people fulfill God's law and the requirements of the covenant with all their heart, soul, and strength (2 Kgs 22 – 23).

Jeremiah was entrusted by God with a difficult prophetic mission (Jer 1:6): to be God's spokesperson in the midst of violence and social injustice, which frightened him because of the immensity of the responsibility. Jeremiah had to overcome many difficulties and problems in order to carry out his mission (Jer 11:18 – 20:18). He suffered deeply when he realized that his presence and his words were the cause of strife in the whole country. At times he did not understand the reasons for his suffering, in moments of solitude he doubted and even thought about rebelling against God. However, with God's help, Jeremiah freely chose to embrace his mission (Jer 20:7-11) and open himself to God's will, like the vessel in the hands of the potter (Jer 18:1-6).

Ruth was a young foreign girl in whose life story God demonstrated how those who leave everything behind in order to serve the poor and the needy are rewarded (Ruth 1:16). She is a symbol of those who struggle for dignity and for every person's right to receive the fruits of the land and the goods that come from God.

Judith was one of those young, generous, and decisive women who trusted God completely when she was chosen to help free the people of Israel from foreign dominion, renewing their faith that God's promises would be fulfilled. Judith left her comfortable and peaceful life (Jdt 8:7), overcoming the mistrust, apathy, and lack of faith of her compatriots (Jdt 8:9-17). She took on the defense of her people, to the point of confronting and conquering Holofernes, the leader of the Assyrian army (Jdt 10 – 13).

Esther, a Jewish girl providentially chosen to become queen of Persia (Est 2:17), had the courage to make hard decisions and to defend her people in critical moments (Est 4:14). When the king offered to grant her anything, even half of his kingdom, she only asked him to spare her life and the lives of her people from Haman's plot (Est 7:2).

The seven **Maccabee** brothers, encouraged by their mother, endured torture and death when they were very young, for fighting against the imposition of the Greek



culture with its humanistic philosophy that ignored God and required breaking the commands of the Mosaic Law. Placing their trust in the God of life, they defended their faith, religious values, and traditions of their people to the end (2 Mc 7:30).

God chose Mary to be the first evangelizer

Mary was a simple young woman, betrothed to Joseph, when God sent the angel Gabriel to tell her that she had been chosen to be the Mother of the Messiah, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mary questions Gabriel and confers with him, then—without fully understanding the mystery before her—she answers with a free and committed faith: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).



From that moment, Mary is the Mother of God, the chosen daughter of the Father, and the spouse of the Holy Spirit. Her mission was to make possible God’s incarnation in human history. In her, the Word of God became flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and among us.

Mary was one of the *anawim*, the faithful remnant in Israel who awaited the promised Messiah. She was a young woman of prayer, with great confidence in God’s plan of salvation.

Years later, Mary intervened at the wedding in Cana, encouraging Jesus to perform his first miracle, which started his public ministry (Jn 2:1-12). Mary is the model disciple who lives the values of the Kingdom and brings us to Jesus.

As mother and disciple of Jesus, Mary participated in his salvific sacrifice. Before his death, she received as her sons and daughters all those redeemed by him in that beautiful moment when Jesus initiated this relationship through John, the beloved disciple (Jn 19:25-27). With suffering and hope, Mary accepted the death of Jesus on the cross and rejoiced with the other disciples when he resurrected to new life forever.

Jesus has invited young people to be evangelizers since the birth of the Church

The New Testament records the testimony of many young people who heard the call of Jesus and embraced his evangelizing mission. They serve as examples for young people today and in every age.

John, the brother of James and son of Zebedee, listened to John the Baptist, pointing at Jesus as “the Lamb of God” (Jn 1:36). Together with another disciple, he followed Jesus to the place where he lived and accepted his invitation to stay with him the whole afternoon. Upon hearing Jesus’ call, John and James left their nets and

followed him. From that moment forward, John always stayed with Jesus. He witnessed his Transfiguration, his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the resurrection of Jairus' daughter. He and Peter prepared the Last Supper together, and he was the only apostle to be present at Calvary. Before he died, Jesus entrusted the care of his Mother Mary to him, which John fulfilled until Mary was assumed into heaven.

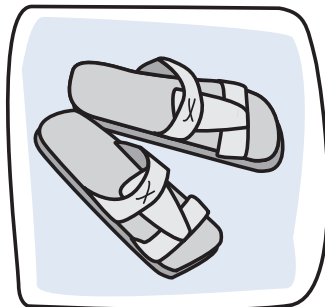
John is the intellectual author of the fourth Gospel, and three apostolic letters and the book of Revelation are attributed to his disciples.

Timothy was a cherished disciple of Paul, who laid his hands on Timothy and entrusted him with the ministry of preaching. Paul regarded Timothy as his "true child in faith" (1 Tim 1:2). Timothy accompanied Paul on his second and third missionary journeys; he was a young man of sincere faith, who was raised in a family that trusted in God (2 Tim 1:5). In one of his letters to him, Paul encourages Timothy saying, "Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity" (1 Tim 4:12). Eventually Paul named him bishop of Ephesus.

Matthias was presented to the first Christian community in Jerusalem, together with Barsabbas, also known as Justus ("the righteous"), to take the place of Judas Iscariot in the apostolic ministry of the Twelve. Scripture says that he was chosen by drawing lots (Acts 1:23-26). Although his works are unknown, his fidelity and closeness to Jesus were enough to be chosen as an apostle.

Mark was likely one of the first to be baptized by Peter. He was Barnabas' cousin and he accompanied him and Paul on their first missionary journey. For some reason he had to return, yet he continued his mission with Barnabas (Acts 15:37-39). He became Peter's interpreter and confidant; he listened to Peter's sermons about the actions and words of Jesus, which Mark learned very well (1 Pt 5:13). Upon the request of Christians in Rome, Mark wrote down what he had heard from Peter about Jesus: the Gospel of Mark. Afterwards, he was named bishop of Alexandria, in Egypt.

Rufus was the son of Simon of Cyrene, who carried Jesus' cross. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, greets him and identifies him as a man chosen by the Lord (Rom 16:13). He was the bishop of Thebes, in Greece.



The Church calls young people today to carry out its evangelizing mission

The Second Vatican Council affirmed that, “The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.”¹⁶ The missionary drive is fruit of the new life that the Trinity transmits to Jesus’ disciples. The Church fulfills this mission through the daily testimony of its members and their readiness to proclaim their faith in Jesus with words and actions as a response to their baptismal vocation.

Together with the priests, religious, and lay adults, young people are called to live fully the priestly, prophetic, and royal dignity they received in baptism. It is with this dignity that young people continue Jesus’ mission: in Christ they become priest, prophet-teacher, and servant-king.¹⁷ Let us remember that in his apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in America*, Pope John Paul II stated that “young Christians, trained to have a mature missionary consciousness, must become apostles to their contemporaries.”¹⁸

The Church in Latin America has made a preferential option for the young,¹⁹ and in the United States it consistently appears as a top priority in pastoral planning processes at all levels, from the national to the parish. This means recognizing the love and concern of God for young people, as well as the trust he places in them. The whole Church community must dedicate attention, concern, and time to address the needs of young people in whom God has placed his loving will.²⁰

On numerous occasions, the young Church has demonstrated in action its great capacity and commitment to serve the Gospel. Many young people have been called to leave the confines of their groups, communities, parishes, dioceses, and even their countries, to work with all their might in the saving mission of the Church. From their own missionary experiences, these young people have discovered and eagerly proclaim that “faith is strengthened when it is given to others.”²¹

This has taken place in the Latin American *Encuentros de Pastoral Juvenil*, where young people have raised up Jesus as the center of their evangelizing outreach, always starting from the local reality of the young people. The publication of guidelines and resources for this ministry, such as the book *Civilización del Amor: Proyecto y Misión*,²² are fruits of this labor. That document maintains that Jesus is alive and present in the world of young people; it highlights that the Church makes a preferential option for the young; and it insists that young people should be offered evangelizing processes calling them to mission and training them to become prophets and witnesses of the Kingdom of God in the Americas.

When young people are given space in the Church, they generate a vibrant ministry of pastoral accompaniment that helps them to mature as young disciples of Jesus. By participating in the life and mission of the Church, they develop a solid Catholic identity that affirms their faith, cultural values, and traditions.²³ This evangelizing process benefits not only the young people who participate in it, but the entire faith community that accepts and receives their gifts and talents.



Immigrant Latin American youth and young adults in the United States have brought the experience of *pastoral juvenil* from their countries of origin and they have contextualized it in their new environment. The *First National Encounter for Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry* (2004-2006) lays out the trajectory of *pastoral juvenil* in this country, with its vision, mission, and pastoral principles, as well as the aspirations, commitments, and challenges of young Latino Catholics. It also emphasizes the need for evangelizing processes and resources for formation and targeted pastoral outreach.²⁴

In the conclusions of its V General Conference, the Latin American bishops called the whole Church in Latin America and the Caribbean to enter into a *permanent state of mission* and emphasized that, “as missionary disciples, the new generations are called to transmit to their fellow young people without distinction, the current of life that comes from Christ, and to share it in community, building up the Church and society.”²⁵ This mission can only be carried out with the participation of the lay faithful, together with the hierarchy of the Church, recognizing that both make it possible for Christians to assume and take responsibility for their baptismal vocation.

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, Pope Benedict XVI expressed his “heartfelt hope for the flowering of a new season of greater love for sacred Scripture on the part of every member of the People of God, so that their prayerful and faith-filled reading of the Bible will, with time, deepen their personal relationship with Jesus.”²⁶ When he convoked the Synod of Bishops in 2008, he insisted that, “the Word of God [must] be known, discerned, loved, and more profoundly grounded and lived in the Church, thereby becoming the Word of Truth and Love for all people.”²⁷ Contemporary Christians have a great need to listen to God, to speak with him, and to seek the Word of God as the source of life and as a means of encountering the Lord.²⁸

In keeping with this theme, Pope Benedict XVI urged young people during the 21st World Youth Day “to become familiar with the Bible, and to have it at hand so that it can be your compass pointing out the road to follow.”²⁹ Two years later he reminded them to allow God’s love to burn within them and to respond generously to God’s call to become bearers of the Good News to their peers,³⁰ both in the environment in which they live as well as in faraway places requiring the assistance of young mission teams.

As the first pope of Latin American origin, Pope Francis has brought the wisdom and pastoral practice of the bishops in Latin America to the entire world. Thus, there is a rich harmony between the documents issued by CELAM and the new pastoral directives coming from the Vatican, especially those outlined in Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. In that document he reaffirms the call of the bishops in Aparecida for all Catholics to become *missionary disciples*.³¹



Evangelizing the cultures of youth and young adults

Through the incarnation, Jesus Christ inserted himself into human history within a specific culture, thus showing that evangelization always requires inculturation.

Through inculturation the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community. She transmits to them her own values at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within. Through inculturation the Church, for her part, becomes a more intelligible sign of what she is and a more effective instrument of mission.³²

The world of young people today has its own culture, way of thinking, and values characterized by a dizzying cultural dynamism, in which the globalized youth culture and its multiple subcultures are in a state of relentless change and evolution. Evangelization in this setting requires a special effort of inculturation and an attitude of constant openness, renewal, and modernization in order to respond to this cultural dynamism in which the young people are immersed.

By offering the Good News of Jesus to young people, the evangelizer helps them to discover within their own culture the values that are consistent with the Gospel. Bringing the Gospel to life among youth and young adults means ratifying their noblest hopes and dreams, their generosity in giving of themselves, their contagious joy, and the authenticity in their expressions. In other words, it involves recognizing and appreciating all the seeds of the Gospel that God has sown in them through their own culture.

The adaptation of the Gospel to the cultures of young people means proclaiming the Good News in a youthful key, so that it may come to life in their experience and culture. Thus, young people “should become the first to carry on the apostolate directly to other young persons, concentrating their apostolic efforts within their own circle, according to the needs of the social environment in which they live.”³³

The Biblical Mission, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People,” promotes in its young missionaries a greater confidence in their faith and growing authenticity as disciples of Jesus. It helps them to go beyond the silent witness of their lifestyle to begin introducing their peers to Jesus through the Word of God and prayer, as well as proclaiming Jesus’ message with processes designed for young people.

The Biblical Mission, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People,” as an evangelizing project of the Church in the 21st Century

Every ecclesial project should have Christ and his Gospel as its center and source, coming forth from the local faith community in communion with the whole Church. Christ reveals himself to us through his person, his life, and his teachings, all contained in Sacred Scripture; that is where the revealed Word of God may be found. Since the deeds and words of Jesus are spirit and life, it is our responsibility to learn how to read and meditate on the Bible.

Using Sacred Scripture as its bedrock, the Catholic community throughout the Americas must learn to tell others about Jesus and to bear witness to his ministry of salvation. His message transforms anyone who listens to the Word of God and receives it with a sincere heart. Thus, the Word becomes the banner, the motor, and the primary tool of the young missionaries.

The Latin American Bishops have affirmed that, “young people should feel that they are the Church, experiencing it as a place of communion and participation.”³⁴ Young people are active members of the Church and protagonists in the evangelization of their peers—living their lives with joy, renewing themselves with enthusiasm, generously sharing their time and gifts, and committing themselves to new endeavors.

The Church’s desire for God’s Word to come to life in young people becomes a reality in every generation whenever she fosters and nourishes their Christian vocation. The face of Jesus is reflected in those young people who strive to live according to his values and bring the Good News to other people.

In the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults, young people participate deeply by training as missionaries and offering the Biblical Mission to their peers. Adults support them by organizing the project, training them, accompanying their efforts, and directing their tasks. The young people listen to the experienced voice of their adult advisers, make decisions regarding the tasks at hand, and then carry them out.

In order for God’s Word to come to life in young people, their protagonism should be maintained in every way possible, preparing them to become the face, the voice, and the power of Jesus active in the lives of their peers. The adults open the way for the young people to grow, following the example of John the Baptist when he introduced Jesus to his disciples. This allows evangelization to take place from one young person to the next, as indicated by the Magisterium of the Church.

The Biblical Mission is designed to promote the protagonism of young people as missionary disciples, preparing them to assume their baptismal vocation and to exercise shared leadership when facilitating the biblical sessions. The Teams of Young Missioners can be composed of either adolescents or young adults, according to the specific circumstances of each Biblical Mission site:

Teams of adolescent missioners may facilitate the biblical sessions for participants of their same age/grade or younger. They must be accompanied by an adult who serves as an adviser. In other words, the adolescents are the ones who conduct the sessions, and if the adult adviser needs to intervene, he or she will do so through the adolescent missioners, advising and guiding them on the best way to complete the process or handle the situation that needs their attention.

Teams of young adult missioners may facilitate the biblical sessions for adolescents as well as for young adults of a similar age or younger. Experienced young adult leaders may not require the accompaniment of an adult adviser, and some may even serve as advisers for less experienced young missioners if they are at least 22 years old and have the appropriate level of formation. However, if the young adult missioners are less experienced, an adviser should be appointed to accompany them.

Pope Francis, in his homily during the Mass on the waterfront of Copacabana for World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, spoke clearly about the importance of young people taking up the mission of Jesus in outreach to their peers:

Careful, though! Jesus did not say: "go, if you would like to, if you have the time," but he said: "Go and make disciples of all nations." Sharing the experience of faith, bearing witness to the faith, proclaiming the Gospel: this is a command that the Lord entrusts to the whole Church, and that includes you...

Where does Jesus send us? There are no borders, no limits: he sends us to everyone. The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. Do not be afraid to go and to bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent. The Lord seeks all, he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love.

In particular, I would like Christ's command: "Go" to resonate in you young people from the Church in Latin America, engaged in the continental mission promoted by the Bishops... This continent has received the proclamation of the Gospel which has marked its history and borne much fruit. Now this proclamation is entrusted also to you, that it may resound with fresh power. The Church needs you, your enthusiasm, your creativity and the joy that is so characteristic of you... Do you know what the best tool is for evangelizing the young? Another young person. This is the path for all of you to follow!³⁵



PART 2

BEING A YOUNG MISSIONER

God's presence in the life and journey of young people calls them to become protagonists in his plan of salvation, so that they may discover their identity as sons and daughters of God and respond by committing themselves to the mission that he has for his people.

—Latin American Episcopal Council
Civilización del Amor. Tarea y Esperanza

2.1 THE PASTORAL CIRCLE AS A METHODOLOGY FOR THE BIBLICAL MISSION

The approach to evangelization contained in the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults begins with the life experience of the young participants and fosters their human development and involvement in a Christian community. It utilizes the Pastoral Circle as a methodology to promote a continuous process of Christian praxis, which should be understood as an action directed by faith with a reflection on the experience. It is the method employed by Instituto Fe y Vida in all of its pastoral and formation programs.



The Pastoral Circle begins with an affirmation of the *being* of each young person, including his or her uniqueness, gifts, and place in the faith community. It motivates the young people to accept themselves and recognize their dignity as sons and daughters of God, *seeing* the reality of their lives and *judging* it in the light of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. It moves them to *act*, carrying out a Christian praxis and *evaluating* it periodically in order to affirm or improve it.

The Circle is closed and starts again by *celebrating* the faith and life of the young people. This revives and strengthens them as a community in order to continue their pastoral activity in a spirit of Christian solidarity. The steps in the Pastoral Circle are as follows:

Being

The Biblical Mission touches on three aspects of *being* a young person in the Church:

- Being a unique individual person, created in the image and likeness of God.
- Being in a continuous process of human development and Christian growth.
- Being in a faith community in which one's vocation is discovered and lived.

It also refers to being active members of a community of faith with other young people, living out their commitment in the Church as a community of communities. Thus, each small community finds its place and its function in relationship with other ecclesial communities.

Seeing

The main reason for belonging to a small community of young people is to have peers with whom to grow in faith and build the Kingdom of God in society. *Seeing* the following five dimensions of life from a gospel perspective is necessary in order for this to happen:

- *Personal development*: human growth toward maturity encompasses the values, attitudes, personality, psychology, and developmental stages of young people.
- *Interpersonal relationships*: young people are developing their capacity to sustain relationships with family, friends, dates, neighbors, and classmates or coworkers.
- *Culture*: the cultural identity of young people is formed by their relationship with their culture of origin, the dominant culture of the country where they live, and the globalization of postmodern and youth cultures.
- *Society*: young people find their place in the world by engaging in work and the economy, as well as through education, socio-political activity, and the struggle for human rights and social justice.
- *Life of faith*: the beliefs, practices, spirituality, traditions and faith formation of young people empower them to make God's presence felt in the world.

Seeing the reality of young people in these five dimensions is achieved by reflecting on the daily events and the major life circumstances that shape the social environment of young people and by critically analyzing the social systems and structures that govern society. This can be accomplished by identifying the following:

- Contributors to the human development and Christian growth of young people.
- Pastoral needs encountered in the various dimensions of young people's lives.
- Challenges being faced by young people in their current circumstances.
- Painful crosses young people must learn to carry with a Christian spirit.
- Situations and actions that produce all of the above.
- Contributions of the human and social sciences for the analysis of these realities.



In the Biblical Mission project, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People,” these dimensions are dealt with through the themes developed in each Biblical Mission. The process is designed to help young people broaden their horizons and reflect critically on their lives in light of their faith.

Judging

As followers of Jesus with our eyes open to the world around us, we must learn to critically analyze what we see from the perspective of Jesus. This means *judging* everything based on gospel values: the simple happenings of daily life; the major events in the neighborhood, parish or school, and the broader society; the messages received from friends, acquaintances, and the mass media; the dangerous threats and life-giving opportunities in the social environment; and the consequences of poor choices.

These realities must be interpreted with the eyes of faith in order to discover what God is telling us through them. We must realize that we are not powerless bystanders in the events around us—we are called to be protagonists in the transformation of our own social environment. This means we must become aware of how we are responding, and how we might respond better, to God’s plan of love.

The Biblical Mission engages the young participants in this kind of *judging* through a series of reflections on Sacred Scripture and Church teachings that help them to strengthen the foundations of their Christian faith, analyze their experiences with gospel priorities, and discover the path God is calling them to take. The following must be done in order to judge rightly in the light of faith:

- Identify the situation or the problem to be judged.
- Ask how Jesus would see this situation and how he would respond to it.
- Find in Scripture the teachings that apply to the issue at hand.
- Find out what the Magisterium of the Church has to say about it.
- Summarize the perspective of Jesus and the Church.
- Reach a conclusion in a spirit of prayer as Jesus’ disciples—individually as well as in community.

Acting

Being a disciple of Jesus means *acting* the way he did (1 Jn 2:6), for a faith without actions is a dead faith (Jas 2:14-17). It implies directing one’s life according to Jesus’ values, motivated by a Christian spirituality that announces, in word and deed, the coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ, thus preparing people to accept this gift from God. It means having a lifestyle guided by the Gospel, whose actions are directed to making known God’s presence whether in daily life or in momentous circumstances.

The Biblical Mission fosters such Christian praxis among the young missionaries, the participants, and the adults who organize and support them. Through reflection and prayer, young people are motivated to commit themselves to building the Kingdom of



God in their setting, to evangelize the culture and society in which they live, and to carry out a specific apostolate according to their vocation.

Acting should lead to a transformation or elimination of situations that are contrary to the Gospel. There are two stages in the process: (a) planning a personal or communal project, and (b) its implementation. The planning stage calls for an assessment of the type of action that is required:

- *Creative action*: when a new response is required or a pastoral project needs to be developed from the beginning.
- *Transformative action*: when an evaluation or critical analysis leads to the conclusion that an attitude, behavior, or custom needs to be changed.
- *Restorative action*: when it is necessary to resolve a problem, need, or conflict.

Evaluating

Evaluating is the key to affirming, correcting, or improving the Christian praxis or pastoral outreach of a group or small community. It allows the leadership team to respond proactively to new challenges as they arise. In the Biblical Mission, evaluation is done consistently throughout the entire process.

In each biblical session there is an activity in which the participants assess their personal contributions to the process during the session. There are also instruments designed for the Teams of Young Missioners at each site to evaluate the sessions.

The Core Team evaluates all of the formation activities required to launch the Biblical Mission. It also conducts a reflection at the end of the project, together with the Teams of Young Missioners, regarding the entire process from beginning to end.

Ongoing evaluation allows the teams to make corrections and adjustments that will improve the outcomes of the entire pastoral project. The final reflection helps the teams to identify the fruits of the Biblical Mission and to detect aspects that can be enhanced in subsequent Biblical Missions and other similar pastoral projects.

The Core Team may also want to conduct *medium and long-term evaluations*, several months or years after implementing the Biblical Mission. The purpose of these evaluations is to ascertain the impact of this type of mission in the life and ministry of the young Church.

Celebrating

Being a missionary disciple among young people and a prophet of hope in their midst is a manifestation of God's grace. This gift implies a disposition of prayerful openness, leading to a joyful expression of personal conversion and commitment to the mission of Jesus Christ.

The Biblical Mission envisions *celebrating* moments of prayer and shared faith in community throughout the process—sometimes among the young missioners and other times with the participants. All of these celebrations promote the action of the

Holy Spirit through personal and communal prayer, providing the young people a deep spiritual experience with which to enrich and direct their lives.

At the beginning and end of the Biblical Mission, the celebrations are carried out in a liturgical setting, preferably during a Sunday parish liturgy. In this way, the community becomes a sign and instrument of personal conversion and communal growth, while the young people celebrate their commitment as missionary disciples.

The four basic kinds of celebration that are built into the Biblical Mission are described below:

- *The Sending Forth Liturgy* offers a liturgical experience that marks the launching of the Biblical Mission in every organizing center.
- The reflections in each biblical session are crowned with a *celebration of faith*, enabling Jesus' message to be internalized through a ritual that encourages conversion and lifelong commitment. The community gives thanks for the gifts it has received, asks forgiveness for human failures, and prays for divine assistance.
- *The Closing Liturgy* also takes place within a liturgical experience, bringing the Biblical Mission to a meaningful end and strengthening the spiritual life and apostolic activity of the young participants for their daily life.
- *The socials* after each biblical session and after the Closing Liturgy offer an opportunity for the young people to celebrate the new life received through the Biblical Mission by socializing with other people who have participated in it.

In summary, the Pastoral Circle helps the young participants *to be* like Jesus, *to see* the world from his perspective, *to judge* their experience based on the Gospel and the teachings of the Church, *to act* for the transformation of the world according to Jesus' values, *to evaluate* their participation in his mission, and *to celebrate* as an expression of thanksgiving for God's gifts. Thus, utilizing the Pastoral Circle in a continuous and progressive manner renews their faith so that they may continue Jesus' mission in history, especially among their peers in the local community.



2.2 SHARED LEADERSHIP IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIBLICAL MISSION

The general approach and the spiritual, theological, ecclesiological, and pastoral contents of the Biblical Mission—which are reflected in its processes—are designed to help adolescents and young adults to become more authentic Christians. The fruits of the Biblical Mission depend greatly on the ability of the young missionaries to create a communal spirit that helps the young participants to accept the Word of God and respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in their personal and community life.

When young people discover Jesus' call to exercise leadership in the Church, it is important that they be able to assume this responsibility successfully. That is why the shared leadership approach in the Biblical Mission is so essential.

The Christian leadership of young people

All of the *human qualities* associated with leadership are important for the Christian life; every young person needs them, both while they are young and when they reach adulthood. A good leader has the following characteristics:

- *Exercises his or her intelligence*, critically observing the social environment and finding creative solutions to improve it or overcome challenges.
- *Develops the qualities and gifts* that allow for leadership as a service to others.
- *Operates from a vision that arouses and motivates action*, always ready to share this vision with others and invite them to join the cause.
- *Inspires trust* thanks to personal integrity, an ability to listen with compassion, and willingness to provide assistance.
- *Guides others*, shedding light on their journey, accompanying them through the good and the bad, and supporting them in times of crisis.

All baptized people should learn to exercise Christian leadership, thereby collaborating with God in salvation history. Being a leader in the style of Jesus means:

- *Proclaiming God the Father's vision for humanity* as our primary goal in life and the direction to lead the people God entrusts to us.
- *Recognizing that our original and true leader is Jesus*, who is “the way and the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6), guiding all of us in both our personal lives and as a community.
- *Having the spirit of the Good Shepherd*, caring for one another in the faith community and seeking out those who have gone astray.
- *Acting as a member of the Body of Christ* in the setting in which we live, having the courage to take a stand against social injustice and the misguided temptations of peers, leading others to do the same through the testimony of our lives, both in words and in deeds.

- *Being open to the work of the Holy Spirit*, who gives each person and community the gifts and charisms needed to grow and carry out their mission.
- *Trusting in personal and communal prayer, reflection, and action*, through which God reveals the path to personal growth and the building of his Kingdom.
- *Knowing how to accompany a community in its journey of faith*, appreciating each person, respecting their life process, and seeking the wellbeing of all.
- *Fostering critical reflections* that start from lived experience, illuminated by the Word of God and the teachings of the Church, allowing people to find new ways to build a Civilization of Love in their own social environment.

The Biblical Mission generates an empowering process of personal and spiritual growth, ecclesial communion, and missionary evangelization among the young participants. For the young missionaries, it also strengthens and nurtures their Christian vocation, in union with Jesus, the teacher and prophet of the Kingdom *par excellence*.

Shared leadership in the Biblical Mission

Bringing the Word of God to millions of young people requires methodological and leadership approaches that are consistent with this effort. For the biblical sessions to generate the personal conversion and social transformation that brings the Word of God to life in young people, shared responsibility for leadership among the team members is required. Such an approach implies adequate spiritual preparation and training for the young missionaries to exercise their leadership.



When planning and carrying out the Biblical Mission, shared leadership is exercised in all of the roles. Each member of both the Core Team and the Teams of Young Missioners performs his or her role in a spirit of collaboration and responsibility, achieving a dynamic harmony that allows each and every person to grow in faith, spirituality, and pastoral skill in order to implement an effective evangelizing outreach.

The process starts when the organizers invite some trainers and advisers to form the Core Team. This team invites a corps of young

leaders to serve as missionaries who will function as either evangelizers or hosts.

The evangelizers will proclaim the Word of God and facilitate prayers and reflections during the biblical sessions. The hosts create a welcoming environment for

the community and assist the evangelizers at all times. The young participants, organized into small groups, also exercise shared leadership when they are invited to facilitate some of the activities in the biblical sessions.

Shared leadership makes it possible to accomplish the goals of the Biblical Mission. Each person—whether a member of the Core Team, a young missionary, or a participant—works together so that the Biblical Mission may bear fruit. Their collaboration generates openness to the work of the Holy Spirit in each and every one.

The two evangelizers work together as a pair, just like the two hosts. These pairs work closely together in the preparation and facilitation of the sessions. The harmony in their actions and the mutual support they provide to one another promote the incarnation of the Good News among the participants and stimulate the formation of an authentic faith community during the Biblical Mission.



2.3 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE CHRISTIAN GROWTH OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Pastoral work with young people is a privilege. Those of us who have been blessed with the opportunity to share faith with them in a pastoral setting enjoy watching them develop their potential over time, and we are happy to learn about their particular interests and to accompany them in the challenges they face. In order to assist the young missionaries and adult advisers who may not be used to working with young people, this section offers a summary of the process of human development and Christian growth from early childhood to young adulthood.³⁶

The process of human development and Christian growth takes place within the framework of the person's relationship with him or herself, with family, with the socio-cultural environment, and with God. It is a lifelong process, slowly integrating the changes of the current and previous stages, and gradually changing focus toward the next stage. In this process, it is often necessary to revisit characteristics that were typical of earlier stages in order to fully develop and integrate them into our lives.

The developmental characteristics presented here for each phase are neither all-inclusive nor exclusive to that phase. This brief presentation is divided into the three main stages in the process of human development for young people: infancy and childhood, pre-adolescence and adolescence, and young adulthood.

Instructions for reading this section

In order for this section to be most useful to the young missionaries, helping them in their own process of growth toward human maturity, it is recommended that they reflect on their own lives as they read about each phase. They should also take time to answer for themselves the questions at the end of each stage. On the Training Day, there is time set aside for them to share the highlights of this reflection with their peers.

Infancy and childhood

Phase 1: I am what I receive (0 – 1 year old)

Watching babies at this age, one notices that they are open to life and eager to receive. They eat, drink, and grasp strongly, receptive to whatever they are given. When babies do not receive what they need, they cry desperately. At that age, this is a healthy sign. The opposite would be a sign of sickness and even danger of death.

This phase prepares us to receive love, accept gifts and humbly ask for what we need to live. As we grow and integrate these skills into our lives, we begin to recognize our smallness and reliance on others, open ourselves to accept love from those around us and from God, ask for help when needed, and express gratitude for the gifts received. Otherwise, we may become selfish, demand that everything revolve around us, and develop an excessive need for attention. As a result, we may learn to disregard other people, making it difficult to embrace them and be grateful for their contributions.

Phase 2: I am what I want and what I discover (1 – 3 years old)

For children at this age, everything is new to them, so they admire and contemplate all they see and experience. They love touching and examining objects, tasting food, and exploring their environment. *In this phase we learn to discover the new and beautiful in life, to communicate through language, and to delight in everything that is beautiful and good.*

As we grow and integrate these skills into our lives, we are able to express our feelings, seek the company of others, and appreciate the beauty that surrounds us as a gift from God for which to be thankful. This process enables us to see the world that surrounds us with new eyes, to discover things we hadn't seen before, to rejoice in these discoveries, and to practice the contemplation of beauty as a form of prayer. Otherwise, we may have difficulty expressing our thoughts and feelings, or lack initiative and motivation to progress in our maturation process. Moreover, we may fall into a limitless desire for more that leaves us perpetually dissatisfied with life.

Phase 3: I am what I imagine and what I believe (4 – 6 years)

This phase may seem to be much more tranquil than the previous one, but that is due to the fact that much of the activity happens internally, in the imagination, where creativity and the desire to experience new things are born. *In this phase our ability to socialize with other children increases, we are able to imagine things we have never experienced, and we begin utilizing and expressing our creativity.*

As we grow and integrate these skills into our lives, we develop the ability to relate intimately with God; we open ourselves to deeper relationships; we see life with excitement and hope; we become creative and spontaneous in our daily life, and we begin to visualize how to accomplish our goals. Otherwise, we may find it difficult to try doing things in a different way, to find something new to appreciate in the midst of daily routine, and to accept changes in life, no matter how necessary they might be.

Phase 4: I am what I learn and how I relate to others (7 – 11 years old)

At this age, children develop an appetite for knowledge, they learn by doing things, and they expand their social circle. They are often competitive and enjoy learning the rules of the game, although they may want to change them for their own benefit. *In this phase we broaden our social relationships, we want to learn new things, and we develop the gifts and skills we discover in ourselves.*

As we grow and integrate these skills into our lives, we learn to relate well with a greater variety of people, enjoy new experiences and insights, and use our gifts and skills wisely. All of these elements are necessary for living the Gospel in community. Otherwise, we tend to enclose ourselves within a small social group, to fear new relationships, to leave our gifts underdeveloped, and to leave unfinished what we set out to accomplish.

Questions for reflection about this stage

- What events from this stage of my life impacted my human development the most? How is that impact noticeable in my life or my character today?
- What events made a difference in my relationship with God? How did they make it happen?

Pre-adolescence and adolescence

Phase 5: I am changing, becoming what I understand (12 – 13 years old)

This phase brings a considerable number of physical and psychological changes. These young people become aware that they are no longer a child, entering into a search for identity and purpose in life. They start visualizing broader horizons for themselves and other people, and they may experience a combination of attraction and rejection regarding peers of the opposite sex. *In this phase we acquire the ability to assimilate what was learned in childhood; we become aware of the changes we are experiencing and get to know ourselves better.*

As we grow and integrate these skills into our lives, we come to understand, embrace, and value our experiences and initiatives. We perceive the changes as sources of growth and may envision ourselves as followers of Jesus and apostles in the local community, taking on small social service projects and ministries through our own initiative. Otherwise, we might end up with feeling insecure about ourselves, easily influenced by other people's judgment or doing whatever it takes to fit in with the crowd. Similarly, we may face the changes we are experiencing with fear, becoming undependable and irresponsible, incapable of serving others.

Phase 6: I am what I feel and what I achieve (14 – 15 years old)

In this phase, the physical and psychological development started in the previous phase continues, but now it is vital to develop autonomy—the ability to make informed choices base on internalized values. This process causes a change in the way of being, thinking, and acting, which contributes to the formation of the young person's identity and personality. Because of this, they may experience conflict with what they had previously learned, intensely feeling the crises and transitions accompanying their physical, emotional, and intellectual growth. They seek a new standpoint in their relationship with their parents that will allow them to develop their individuality, and they are very concerned about feeling accepted by their peers.

In this phase we learn to be ourselves, to accept and understand the changes that life brings, and to overcome crises and transitions. As we grow and integrate these skills into our lives, our character is solidified and we establish the foundations for the autonomy needed to mature as individual human beings, while maintaining a healthy interdependence with our family and the community. Furthermore, the gospel values and the moral principles taught by the Church can become a part of our innermost selves, as they help us to overcome the insecurities and crises typical of the age. This allows us to see life as a process of continual growth and learning, where changes and crises can have a positive impact in our development.

Otherwise, we face the risk of developing an insecure personality, retaining a psychological dependence on our parents and relying on the opinions of our peers to make decisions or feel good about ourselves. Other effects of underdevelopment in this phase are continuous mood changes, unreliability, giving up when a task becomes difficult, and being carried away by emotions without carefully weighing them.

Questions for reflection about this stage

- What events from this stage of my life impacted my human development the most? How is that impact noticeable in my life or my character today?
- What events made a difference in my relationship with God? How did they make it happen?
- What human and spiritual goals did or do I have for the next stage of my life, as a young adult?

Young adulthood

Phase 7: I am what I think and what I decide (16 – 18 years old)

This phase brings a growing sense of personal freedom; personality and moral character are forged through interaction with the world and others, and integrated through self-reflection. Relationships with friends are broadened and deepened; choices are made to further one's studies and/or to enter the workforce. *In this phase we deepen our understanding and ability to articulate the meaning of life, we integrate our values into patterns of behavior, and we strengthen our will by making important decisions about what we want to be and do as adults.*

As we grow and integrate these skills into our lives, we begin to select our friends more intentionally, to choose freely to follow Jesus and to participate in a faith community, and to direct our behavior and attitudes according to our values. From this stage on, we develop a habit of evaluating the decisions of the past in light of the new experiences life has to offer, making a decision to change paths in life when necessary. Otherwise, we can become very vulnerable to negative social influences, losing direction in our lives, making irresponsible use of our freedom, and avoiding any lasting commitments for our human development and Christian growth.

Phase 8: I am my identity, my vocation, and my character (19 – 22 years old)

In this phase people take charge of their own lives with a spirit of joy, diligence, courage, and hope. They recognize their own qualities and limitations and learn to have patience with themselves. They feel good about who they are, while recognizing the need to continue their development; they can see situations objectively, respect the rights and needs of others, and are able to establish deeper relationships. They feel confident and secure, knowing that they are citizens of the world and have an active role in history. *In this phase we may establish more intimate relationships, work more productively, and identify the profession, lifestyle, and state in life we would like to pursue.*

As we grow and integrate these skills into our lives, we can develop stable interpersonal relationships, assume our baptismal commitments, and collaborate with God in the unfolding of salvation history. Otherwise, we may stagnate in a restless and continuous search for identity, fearful of entering the adult world of responsibility and commitment, and never finding our place and mission in the world and in history.

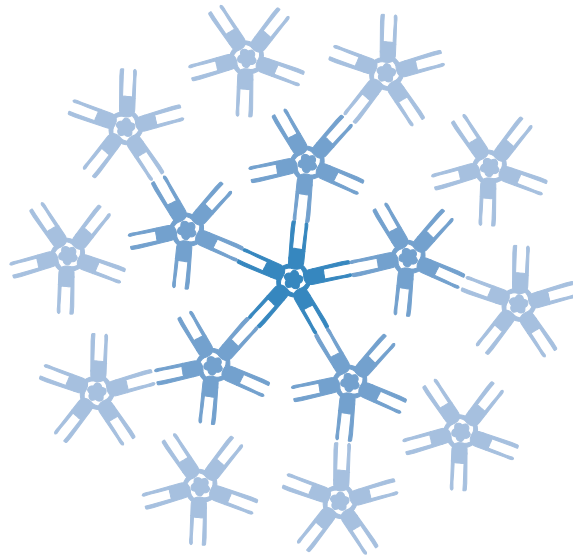
Phase 9: I am a well-integrated young adult (22 – 26+ years old)

This phase brings together all of the previous phases, making it possible to seek personal fulfillment along with the good of society in a conscious manner. At this age, one can become an agent of change and renewal, seriously committed to working toward a better world and a more authentic Church. It is a phase of expanding one's horizons, solidifying one's character, and clarifying one's vocation and mission in the world. *In this phase we are able to see that stability and change in our lives are sources of personal growth, signs that God is calling us to fulfill our greatest potential as human beings and as Christians.*

The development of these skills continues throughout adult life, in accordance with the state of life chosen and the decisions taken. This process allows us to be prophets of hope wherever we are, for all the people God puts in our path, from our closest loved ones to those who only occasionally have need of our love, compassion, and service. If we do not develop and integrate the skills belonging to this phase, we may be left with a very short-sighted vision of our human vocation and our Christian mission. This restricts our personal development and limits our collaboration with God in the ongoing advancement of salvation history.

Questions for reflection about this stage

- What events from this stage of my life impacted my human development the most? How is that impact noticeable in my life or my character today?
- What events made a difference in my relationship with God? How did they make it happen?
- What human and spiritual goals do I have for my life as an adult?



PART 3

CARRYING OUT THE BIBLICAL MISSION

We are conscious and grateful that the Father so loved the world that he sent his Son to save it, and so we want to be continuers of his mission, because it is the reason for the Church's existence and defines its deepest identity.

—Latin American Episcopal Council
Aparecida, Conclusive Document

3.1 PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE BIBLICAL MISSION

The Biblical Mission implementation has three stages, each one with various steps. The preparation time will depend on the size of the territory where it takes place.

Stage 1: Initial preparation

The initial preparation consists of four steps:

1. Embracing the Biblical Mission

The decision to implement the Biblical Mission can originate from anyone interested in bringing the Word of God to young people. It could be peer leaders in young adult ministry, catechists, priests, youth ministry leaders, parents, and so on. However, in order to carry out the Biblical Mission, it is essential that one or more people who love the Word of God and have some biblical and pastoral training commit themselves to organize it. These people are called *organizers*.

2. Forming the Core Team

The functions of the Core Team are: to organize and coordinate the Biblical Mission; to conduct the training of the young missionaries; and to foster their protagonism in the Biblical Mission. This team is made up of adults who serve as trainers and advisers under the coordination of the lead organizer.

3. Studying the materials and planning the Biblical Mission

The Core Team studies the two *Manuals*—for the Core Team and the Team of Young Missioners—as well as the *Guidebook* and the *Mission Journal*. All four publications are necessary to understand the process of the Biblical Mission, as well as its methodology, contents, and the specific role of each person.



The Core Team plans the Biblical Mission and establishes a general calendar. It leaves to each site the scheduling of the activities at the local level.

4. Identifying potential young missionaries

The Core Team identifies youth and young adults with the potential to serve as evangelizers or hosts. The Team will organize a convocation, during which they present the project to them, affirm their vocation as disciples and apostles of Jesus, and encourage them to commit to serve in this Biblical Mission.

Stage 2: Training of the young missionaries

The training of the young missionaries has four steps:

1. Inviting the young missionaries

The young missionaries receive Jesus' call to become bearers of God's Word to their peers through a personal invitation from one of the Core Team members. This marks the beginning of their training, following the example of Jesus, who invited his disciples one by one to encourage and train them for his mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. The invitation is formalized during the Convocation in which the young missionaries receive an overview of what the Biblical Mission is and what it will require of them. At the end they make an informal commit to be trained and to serve in a team.

2. Experiencing the Biblical Mission and discerning roles

A key task of the Core Team is to facilitate an Experience of the Biblical Mission for the young missionaries, typically in the form of a weekend retreat. The young missionaries participate in the four biblical sessions of the Biblical Mission and discern their call to serve as evangelizers or hosts. Throughout the process, they use the *Mission Journal* to write their reflections.

During the discernment process, the young missionaries receive the *Mission Guidebook* and the *Manual for the Team of Young Missioners*, which they will study in preparation for the Training Day. They should write down any questions they may have about the process and content of each of the four sessions, as well as regarding their personal role and the role of other members of the Team of Young Missioners.

3. Training Day

The Training Day offers the young missionaries the theoretical and practical formation they will need to carry out the Biblical Mission. The *mística* of the Biblical Mission is emphasized and the participants reflect on their calling and commitment as young missionaries. The roles of evangelizer and host are defined, and the teams are formed and assigned to each Biblical Mission site. The teams then organize themselves to prepare the four biblical sessions and to participate in the Sending Forth Liturgy.

4. Preparing to facilitate the biblical sessions

The previous steps—the personal invitation extended by the Core Team as Jesus did with his disciples; the Experience of the Biblical Mission; studying the *Guidebook* and the *Manual*, and the Training Day—are all formative opportunities for the young missionaries. The preparation of the four biblical sessions, the Sending Forth Liturgy, the facilitation of the biblical sessions at each site, and the Closing Liturgy taken together will complete the formation-in-action process of this project, centered on the call to bring the Word of God to young people through the Biblical Mission.

Stage 3: Implementation of the Biblical Mission

The implementation of the Biblical Mission consists of two liturgies—the opening and closing liturgies—and the four biblical sessions. The steps in this process are:

1. Sending Forth Liturgy

The sending forth rite takes place within a liturgy, preferably a Sunday Eucharist. The priest hands the young missionaries the Bible and the Mission Cross that will be enthroned on the altar at their site, as well as their personal crosses identifying them as missionaries. He also presents the Core Team and the advisers who will support the young people in their work. The parish community witnesses the sending forth and is invited to pray throughout the Biblical Mission and to participate in the closing celebration.

2. Inviting participants to the Biblical Mission

Each Team of Young Missioners will make a list with the names of their friends, classmates, coworkers, relatives, and acquaintances they wish to invite to the Biblical Mission. They will decide the maximum number that can participate at each site. If the young missionaries are teenagers, between 16 and 20 young participants is ideal, or up to 40 if they are young adults. Other aspects to consider are the level of experience of the missionaries and the capacity of the facilities where the Biblical Mission will be held.

If the list is greater than the site's capacity, each young missionary will prioritize his or her candidates in order to balance the number of invitations from each team member. If some of the first invitees choose not to participate, others on the list can take their place. They may also be referred to other Biblical Mission sites close to where they live. If the team prefers, they may also organize more Biblical Missions at the same site in the future. On the other hand, if more participants are needed, announcements can be made at Mass, with display posters, flyers, websites, email, local radio ads, etc.

3. Facilitating the four biblical sessions: “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People”

The Teams of Young Missioners begin their preparation by reading the passages from Sacred Scripture that each session is based on, praying with them and pondering them in their hearts. They will also reflect on their own lives in light of these messages.

With this vital experience of the Word of God, they will study the plan and process for each session in the *Mission Guidebook*: the activities to be developed, the



contents to be presented, the reflections to be facilitated, the materials for the session, and the responsibilities of each evangelizer and host. It is recommended to enthrone and use *The Catholic Youth Bible* as the Mission Bible. Any other version of the *New American Bible Revised Edition* may also be used, as the biblical text is the same. The biblical texts used for prayer and reflection are transcribed in the *Mission Journal* and the *Mission Guidebook*, so that every participant may have the same version.

New participants may be welcomed at the second and third sessions, if the Biblical Mission site has the capacity and the team wants to include more young people. In the last session, the participants will be invited to continue their faith journey in a group or community of young people affiliated with the parish, school, or apostolic movement that is organizing the Biblical Mission. The young evangelizers will describe the available options, with the possibility that the Biblical Mission participants may form a faith community themselves. Refreshments will be served at the end of each session.

After each of the four biblical sessions, young missionaries and their advisers evaluate the session using the forms presented at the end of the *Mission Guidebook*. This evaluation should take place immediately in order to ensure accuracy regarding what actually happened. At the end of the entire Biblical Mission, the Team of Young Missioners will summarize the evaluations and present a report to the Core Team.

4. Closing Liturgy and social gathering

The closing of the Biblical Mission has two distinct moments:

- **Closing Liturgy.** The conclusion of the Biblical Mission should be celebrated during a Sunday Eucharist, with the participation of all the young missionaries and young people who experienced the Biblical Mission in the parish or region. It is a festive, joyful, youthful, and participatory celebration, where the fruits of each Biblical Mission site are offered to God. The priest, with the Teams of Young Missioners, sends the participants forth to live the Biblical Mission in daily life.
- **Social gathering.** At the end of the Eucharistic celebration, everyone who participated in the Biblical Mission is invited to the social, along with the parish community. It is an opportunity to socialize, rejoice, and make new friends.

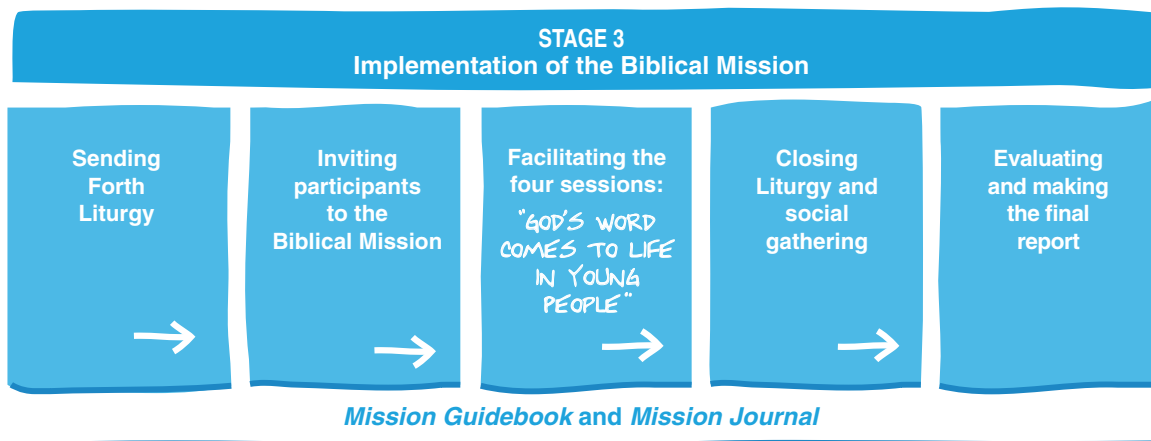
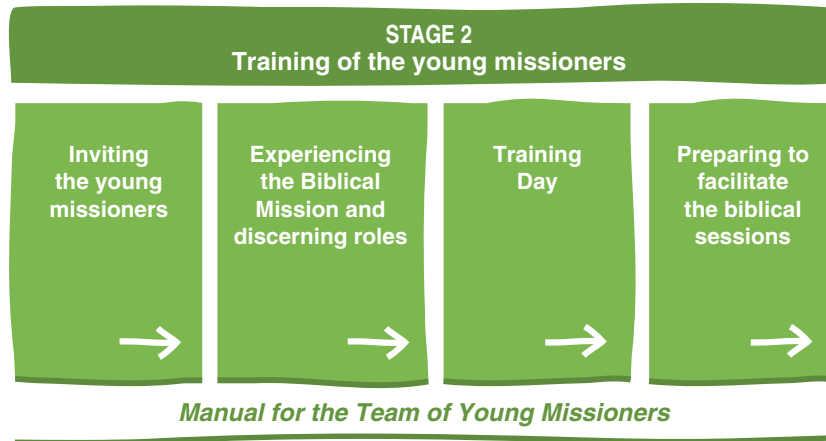
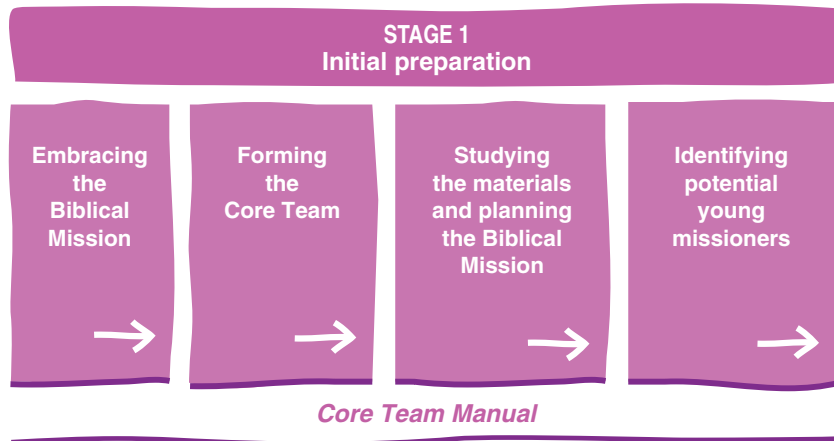
5. Evaluating and making the final report

The Core Team is responsible for evaluating the formative activities, according to the guidelines in the *Core Team Manual*. The young missionaries are responsible for evaluating the implementation of the biblical sessions with the young participants, using the forms presented in the *Mission Guidebook*. At the end of the Biblical Mission, there should be a reflection session for the Core Team to evaluate the entire pastoral project.

It is requested that the organizing leader send a final report to Instituto Fe y Vida, which Fe y Vida will use to evaluate the implementation of the Biblical Mission, to improve subsequent Biblical Missions, and to provide pertinent insights to the people and institutions subsidizing the project. In turn, Instituto Fe y Vida will analyze the feedback and send an overview report to those who send in their final report. In this way, the Pastoral Circle around which the project was designed comes to a close.



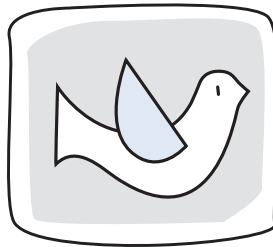
Chart of the Biblical Mission Process



Sample Calendar for Planning the Biblical Mission

	Month 1				Month 2				Month 3				Month 4				Month 5								
	Initial preparation				Training of the young missionaries				Implementation of the Biblical Mission																
Process	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Stage 1: Initial preparation																									
Embracing the Biblical Mission																									
Forming the Core Team with the trainers and advisers																									
Studying the materials and planning the Biblical Mission																									
Identifying potential young missionaries																									
Stage 2: Training of the young missionaries																									
Inviting the young missionaries																									
Experiencing the Biblical Mission and discerning roles																									
Training Day																									
Preparing to facilitate the biblical sessions																									
Stage 3: Implementation of the Biblical Mission																									
Sending Forth Liturgy																									
Inviting participants to the Biblical Mission																									
Facilitating the four biblical sessions																									
Closing Liturgy and social gathering																									
Evaluating and making the final report																									

There is a template in Excel available on the website to record the pertinent dates. It is important to share the local calendar with the young missionaries, as well as the territorial distribution of the Biblical Mission sites supported by the organizing center. This will give them an overview of the process and the implementation of the Biblical Mission that will help them to realize the importance of their role in it. They will also be able to refer young people to one site or another, and they will be encouraged to offer more sites in subsequent Biblical Missions.



3.2 Interconnectedness of the four publications of the Biblical Mission

The four publications of the Biblical Mission—the *Core Team Manual*, the *Manual for the Team of Young Missioners*, the *Mission Guidebook*, and the *Mission Journal*—complement one another in terms of the logistics for implementing the project. When new Biblical Missions are developed from time to time, the two *Manuals* will remain in use, while the *Guidebook* and *Journal* will have new content each time. The following table describes the objectives, content, and audience for each of these resources.

OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR PUBLICATIONS			
Publication	Objectives	Content	Audience
Core Team Manual	To train the Core Team	<i>Mistica</i> of the Biblical Mission Process and organization of the Biblical Mission The protagonism of young people and the role of adults in the Biblical Mission Process for the formation and training of the Teams of Young Missioners Final evaluation of the entire process	Core Team
Manual for the Team of Young Missioners	To train the Team(s) of Young Missioners	<i>Mistica</i> of the Biblical Mission The protagonism of young people and shared leadership Being a young missioner Carrying out the Biblical Mission	Core Team Team of Young Missioners
Mission Guidebook	To provide methodological instructions for implementing the biblical sessions	Methodological instructions Entire process for the four biblical sessions Evaluations of the sessions	Core Team Team of Young Missioners
Mission Journal	To provide space for writing personal reflections on the content of the Biblical Mission	Reflections and content necessary for each session, from the perspective of the participants	Core Team Team of Young Missioners Young participants



Using the *Mission Guidebook* and *Journal*

The *Mission Guidebook* and *Journal* capture the overall *mística* of the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People,” and the spirituality that flows from receiving the Word of God in each session. The *Guidebook* and the *Journal* work hand-in-hand together; the first is designed for the Team of Young Missioners, and the second for the participants.

These publications also help the trainers and advisers to prepare the Teams of Young Missioners. They guide the evangelizers and hosts to: delve into the message found in God’s Word for each session; study and develop the thematic content; prepare the sessions to the best of their ability; and skillfully facilitate them as a team.

Mission Guidebook

The *Guidebook* gives step-by-step instructions to the evangelizers and hosts for facilitating each of the four biblical sessions. It contains the objectives and life-giving messages that orient each session, the biblical passages for the prayers and reflections, the thematic content related to the scriptural messages, and detailed directions for conducting the activities. A full description of the *Guidebook* is presented in the “Methodological introduction to the *Guidebook*.”

Mission Journal

The *Journal* is directly linked to the *Guidebook*. It contains the full text of the passages from Sacred Scripture, as well as the prayers and reflections that the participants will use during each session. The personal notes that the participants write in their *Journal* must be kept private; only the owner should be allowed to access its contents, unless he or she chooses to share it with others.

The first contact the young missioners will have with the publications is through the *Journal*, which they will use during the Experience of the Biblical Mission, at the beginning of their training. In this way, they learn the process by experiencing it for themselves—carrying out all the activities and gaining wisdom through their reflections, all of which will help them in their role as evangelizers or hosts. The instructions for directing the participants’ use of the *Journal* are found in the *Guidebook*. They are highlighted both in the “Session Plan” and in the “Session Process.”

3.3 FORMATION-IN-ACTION PROCESS OF THE YOUNG MISSIONERS

The young missioners prepare themselves through thirteen activities so that God’s Word may come to life in the young participants of the Biblical Mission. These activities constitute a single formation-in-action process, presented in the chart on the next page. Following that, the spiritual approach of the evangelizers, hosts, and advisers is described by means of three sets of “ten commandments” that specify the skills and attitudes needed to fulfill each of these closely interrelated roles.

FORMATION-IN-ACTION PROCESS
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE YOUNG MISSIONERS

Steps	Formation-in-action
1. Invitation to the Biblical Mission	Core Team members invite select young leaders in Jesus' name to become missionaries in this project.
2. Convocation: First formal activity of the Biblical Mission	Young leaders receive information about the Biblical Mission and the formation process it entails, culminating in a commitment to become part of a Team of Young Missioners.
3. Experience of the Biblical Mission	Young missionaries participate in a weekend or a two-day retreat to work through the four sessions of the Biblical Mission for themselves in order to acquire the necessary experience to facilitate them.
4. Discernment of roles for the young missionaries	Young missionaries discern Jesus' call to serve in the Biblical Mission as an evangelizer or a host in order to freely and consciously undertake this commitment in a Team of Young Missioners.
5. Study required materials	Young missionaries study the <i>Mission Guidebook</i> and the <i>Manual for the Team of Young Missioners</i> , in preparation for the Training Day.
6. Training Day	Young missionaries participate in a Training Day to receive formation, acquire skills, and gain knowledge for the roles they will assume. They are formed into teams and get organized to plan the sessions.
7. Preparation for the Biblical Mission in teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study each session in the <i>Mission Guidebook</i>, practice the assigned roles, and organize the necessary materials. • Develop strategies to promote the Biblical Mission in the area and identify participants to invite.
8. Sending Forth Liturgy	Core Team members and young missionaries celebrate the launching of the Biblical Mission, preferably in a Sunday Eucharistic liturgy.
9. Invitation of participants	Young missionaries invite friends, classmates, coworkers, neighbors, acquaintances, and other young people to participate in the Biblical Mission, whether or not they are active in the Church.
10. Facilitation of the Biblical Mission	Young Missioners collaborate to conduct the four biblical sessions, following the process indicated in the <i>Mission Guidebook</i> and guiding the participants in the use of the <i>Journal</i> .
11. Evaluation of the biblical sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the leadership roles and overall participation in each session in order to improve the following sessions. • General evaluation to improve future Biblical Missions.
12. Closing Liturgy and social gathering	Core Team members coordinate the organization of the Closing Liturgy and of the social gathering that follows.
13. Experiencing the Biblical Mission in daily life	Young missionaries and advisers help participants to join an existing youth group or form a new one, and provide information about ways to participate in the life and mission of the Church.

Ten commandments for evangelizers, hosts, and advisers

The first two of the following sets of ten commandments present the necessary qualities and attitudes to effectively fulfill the roles of evangelizer and host. The last set describes how the advisers should interact with the young missionaries in order for the young people to become the true protagonists of the Biblical Mission, thereby enriching their formation-in-action process and improving their pastoral outreach, aided by the wisdom and experience of the adviser. These sets of ten commandments are practical and assume the *mística* as well as the pastoral-theological focus of the Biblical Mission.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR EVANGELIZERS

1. Invite young people to the Biblical Mission with enthusiasm and conviction.
2. Prepare for the biblical sessions by studying them, praying over them, and mastering both the content and the processes to be facilitated.
3. Organize each session, first in pairs—both evangelizers and both hosts—and afterwards as a Team of Young Missioners assigned to the site.
4. Consult the advisers and listen to their recommendations.
5. Proclaim the Word of God with passion and great respect.
6. Create a favorable environment for personal and community prayer.
7. Conduct the sessions in a lively, interesting, and effective manner by being organized and well prepared.
8. Ensure that the sessions flow and remain on schedule through an effective shared leadership.
9. Form the small groups and make sure that young people undertake the roles of facilitator, secretary, and timekeeper as needed, in order to promote the full participation of everyone.
10. Evaluate each biblical session immediately after it ends and send the general evaluation to the Core Team when the Biblical Mission is over.



TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR HOSTS

1. Invite young people to the Biblical Mission with enthusiasm and conviction.
2. Prepare for the biblical sessions by studying them, praying over them, and gathering or creating all of the materials for each session.
3. Organize each session, first in pairs—both evangelizers and both hosts—and afterwards as a Team of Young Missioners assigned to the site.
4. Consult the advisers and listen to their recommendations.
5. Prepare the Biblical Mission site to provide an appropriate setting for the biblical sessions.
6. Create a welcoming environment that generates a spirit of Christian community.
7. Assist the evangelizers and ensure that the sessions flow and remain on schedule through an effective shared leadership.
8. Invite some participants to help with the social gathering at the end of each session and to leave the Biblical Mission site clean and in good order.
9. Provide snacks and create a friendly environment during the social.
10. Evaluate each biblical session immediately after it ends and send the general evaluation to the Core Team when the Biblical Mission is over.



TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR ADVISERS

1. Foster the protagonism of the Team of Young Missioners, assuming the proper role of an adviser—not the leader or facilitator.
2. Respect the leadership of the young missioners in their responsibilities of coordinating the biblical sessions and facilitating the processes.
3. Make sure that the evangelizers and hosts are well prepared for each activity of the session, from start to finish.
4. Advise and train the young missioners, taking into account their age and pastoral experience.
5. Recommend adjustments to the activities of each session, in view of the time available, the characteristics of the group, and the needs of the participants.
6. Support the members of the Team of Young Missioners, empowering them to conduct the sessions with shared leadership and responsibility.
7. Suggest and model for the evangelizers how to fulfill their role by coordinating the activities, proclaiming the Word, and facilitating the times for prayer and reflection.
8. Support the hosts in gathering or creating all the required materials, ensuring that they are ready and available for each biblical session.
9. Assist, if necessary, in forming the small groups that will work together on some of the activities.
10. Invite young people to the Biblical Mission with enthusiasm and conviction, and promote their participation in the Church and in a youth group or community.



3.4 PREPARATION BY THE YOUNG MISSIONERS FOR THE TRAINING DAY

The dedication with which the young missionaries prepare for the Training Day has significant repercussions. A lot can be accomplished in a day of intensive formation, if the participants have prepared beforehand.

The objectives for the Training Day are:

- To present the entire process of the Biblical Mission and its contributions to the New Evangelization.
- To explain the theological and pastoral foundations of the Biblical Mission.
- To highlight how the evangelizing methodology fosters leadership formation.
- To impart an appreciation of the shared leadership approach that characterizes and makes the Biblical Mission possible.
- To reflect on the process of human development and Christian growth among young people.
- To review the process for implementing the Biblical Mission and the personal leadership that the young people will exercise within it.
- To convey a deep familiarity with the roles of the evangelizers and hosts, and to form Teams of Young Missioners for each Biblical Mission site.
- To resolve any questions about the general process of the four biblical sessions, leaving specific issues for the teams to address when each session is prepared.
- To give practical recommendations for effective leadership.

Preparation prior to the Training Day

In order for the objectives above to be met, it is necessary to understand the interconnectedness of this *Manual*, the *Mission Guidebook*, and the *Mission Journal*. This will require about 12 hours of personal study for most young leaders.

It is important to call to mind that Jesus' invitation to become young missionaries is an honor that implies a serious responsibility. The following two sections indicate the steps to take in carrying out this preparation.

Study this *Manual*

There are two approaches that will be taken in studying this *Manual*. In some sections, a careful reading is required, and the young missionaries are asked to underline or analyze ideas, guidelines, or recommendations. In other cases, a more general review is sufficient to become familiar with the material and identify aspects in need of clarification. The following guide will lead the young missionaries through this process:

1. Review the *Manual's* table of contents to become familiar with it.
2. Read each section, writing down what requires explanation or clarification.

Part 1

- Highlight the most important concepts and directives, writing down what is not clear.

Part 2

- Review Sections 2.1 and 2.2, pp. 37-44, to get to know their content and identify any uncertainties. Reflect on the Experience of the Biblical Mission in light of the Pastoral Circle and shared leadership sections.
- Read Section 2.3, pp. 45-50, contemplating the material from the perspective of one's own process of human development and Christian growth. **Answer the questions after each stage**, since this reflection will be shared on the Training Day.

Part 3

- Review Sections 3.1 and 3.2, pp. 51-58, to learn about the entire process of the Biblical Mission and to see how the four publications are related to each other.
- Read Section 3.3, pp. 58-62, identifying the activities and skills that are most familiar, as well as the areas that are new or that could present major challenges. Pay special attention to the set of "ten commandments" that corresponds to their particular role, as well as the guidelines for their relationship with the advisers.
- Read Section 3.5, pp. 67-72, analyzing and highlighting each guideline with one of the following symbols:

- | |
|---|
| <p>E = It will be easy for me to follow this guideline</p> <p>C = It will be a challenge for me to follow this guideline</p> <p>O = I need to overcome a negative habit to follow this guideline</p> <p>S = This guideline requires my support for other team members</p> |
|---|

- Review Section 3.6, pp. 73-80, to learn about the roles that need to be performed in preparing for and celebrating the Sending Forth and Closing Liturgies. Keep in mind that the Core Team is responsible for coordinating the liturgies.

Study the *Mission Guidebook*

The *Mission Guidebook* is what the trainers and advisers must study in order to conduct the Experience of the Biblical Mission. After that, the young missionaries also need to become familiar with it, since it will be their primary tool to prepare the biblical sessions, organize their missionary team, and reflect on the themes of each Biblical Mission.*

In order for the Training Day to be most effective, the *Guidebook* should be studied beforehand and any questions about the content or process should be written down. Essential to this process is a thorough review of the “Methodological introduction to the *Guidebook*,” carrying out the tasks below:

1. Follow the “Instructions for studying and understanding the sessions,” applying them only to Session 1, in order to know: (a) how the session is structured; (b) how its parts and activities are organized; and (c) how the Team of Young Missioners works together. Then, during the Training Day, any uncertainties can be clarified so that when it is time to prepare the biblical sessions, they will be able to work effectively with the content, process, and activities of each.
2. Read the “Instructions for preparing for each session.” Write down any remaining questions. This should be done before facilitating each session.



* References to the *Guidebook* in this *Manual* only indicate the title of the section or subsection that the reader should study. Pages are not mentioned because pagination may vary in the *Guidebooks* from one Biblical Mission to the next. To easily identify each section, it is recommended to review the table of contents of the *Guidebook* being used.

YOUNG MISSIONERS' PRAYER "GUIDE AND STRENGTHEN US WITH GOD'S WORD"

Stay with us, Lord!
Join us in our mission to reach today's young people.

Stay with us, Lord!
You are light and nourishment for our lives,
propelling us to proclaim the Good News
and to give witness to your resurrection.

Stay with us, Lord!
You are Truth itself, the one who reveals the Father to us.
Enlighten our minds with this your word,
and help us to experience the beauty of believing in you.

Stay with us, Lord!
You are abundant life.
Fill our families and friends with this life
so that we may all journey together in union with you.

Stay with us, Lord!
Your Word is love, justice, and freedom.
Give hope to the lives of those suffering
from loneliness, poverty, and oppression.

Lord, send us your Spirit!
Strengthen us as your missionary disciples.
Receive our enthusiasm and commitment,
so that God's Word may come to life in young people.

To Mary, your Mother and our mother,
we entrust the New Evangelization in the Americas,
commending to her care the young Church,
pilgrim and builder of culture and society.

—Based on Pope Benedict XVI's Inaugural Address in Aparecida

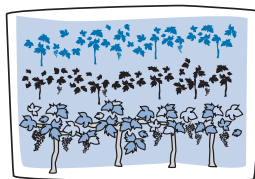


3.5 GUIDELINES FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF THE YOUNG MISSIONERS

Shared leadership is the key to creating an environment of hospitality and trust among the participants, and to fostering mutual support among the team members. The guidelines presented below are useful for facilitating group activities on any occasion and, therefore, for conducting the sessions of this Biblical Mission.

Guidelines for inviting participants to the Biblical Mission

1. **Everyone is welcome to participate in the Biblical Mission.** Invite young people with whom a personal relationship already exists, as well as those in nearby areas, neighboring youth groups, classmates, coworkers, etc. Fears, stereotypes, or assumptions about who is likely to take part should be overcome, since Jesus calls everyone to be nourished by the Word of God.
2. **Identify people to be invited.** Make a list with the names of young people and groups to be contacted personally or by other means. Determine as a team who will be invited and by whom, as well as what kind of follow-up will be done. Whenever a young person is invited, their contact information should be requested so they can be added to the list. This will make it easier to send encouraging messages or last-minute announcements.
3. **Personal invitation.** Personal invitations are the most effective, especially if extended in person, either by a visit, a phone call, a direct email or text message, or a personalized flyer/message. Resources for promoting the Biblical Mission are available on the website, and they can be personalized by filling in the address of the site, the schedule of the sessions, and instructions for making contact to obtain additional information or to register for the Biblical Mission.
4. **Utilize various means of communication.** Among the provided materials for publicity, there are posters and invitations to promote the Biblical Mission in schools, parishes, groups and from house to house. It can also be advertised through radio, television, websites, social networking sites and apps, and blogs, especially by providing a link to the Biblical Mission's website.
5. **Invite by sharing personal experience.** Many young people will be motivated to participate when they find out that the Biblical Mission is an energizing and hopeful experience. Without giving away too many details about the processes and activities, explain briefly that the Biblical Mission offers an opportunity to experience Jesus' liberating love, and to have an encounter with the Word of God in an enjoyable, reflective, and meaningful way with other young people.



Guidelines for evangelizing

1. **Letting Jesus be the Teacher.** As disciples of Jesus, our mission is to help other young people to have an encounter with him. Our task, through all of the activities of the Biblical Mission, is to empower young people to open their hearts and minds to what Jesus wants to say to them, so that they may learn from him and open their hearts and minds to put his teachings into practice.
2. **Providing a living witness.** Young missionaries are sent by Jesus to their peers, just as he sent out the first apostles (Mt 10:1-14; Lc 10:1-7). Collaborating with Jesus' in such a special way implies a serious commitment to live in accordance with his values. It means making our own life a living testimony of Jesus' presence within us and in history, demonstrating consistency between our lives and the teachings of the Gospel in our words, lifestyle, actions, and choices.
3. **Sharing faith.** Evangelizing involves sharing our personal experience of Jesus' love with other people, so that our experience and faith can become a true proclamation of Good News for them. Just like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, young missionaries have a living relationship with Jesus. Through their encounter with him in the Experience of the Biblical Mission, their relationship with Jesus grew in depth and richness, becoming a source of inspiration for sharing their faith while facilitating the biblical sessions.
4. **Proclaiming the Word and leading reflections about it.** In order to proclaim the Word effectively and lead fruitful reflections on it, the evangelizer must first reflect on, pray with, and live the message. His or her own experience with Sacred Scripture allows for an authentic sharing of love for God's Word, proclaiming it with respect and solemnity, and inviting others to prayerfully reflect on it in order to discover the message that Jesus has for them.

Proclaiming the Word of God is more than just reading a biblical text out loud. When the Word is proclaimed, it should be done in a standing position, facing the community, with solemnity and clear enunciation. The lector should carefully prepare ahead of time for this important task. In contrast, simply reading a biblical text can be done individually in silence, or aloud in an informal setting, either seated or kneeling down in prayer.

5. **Knowing how to create a prayerful environment.** Jesus prayed constantly. His commandment of love was preceded by another mandate: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone!" (Mk 12:29). In order to receive Jesus' message, we have to first focus our attention in God. His disciples were impressed by the way Jesus prayed, so they asked him to teach them how to pray.

Young missionaries pray both individually and as a team, recognizing God's presence and listening to his message. They ask for enlightenment and strength for their mission, as well as for the young people to whom they will bear the Good News of Jesus. This experience will enable the missionaries to create a suitable environment and invite the young participants to enter deeply into experiences of prayer and intimacy with the Lord.



6. **Using language appropriate for companions on the journey.** Partaking in the Biblical Mission should be a time of joy and rest from the daily routine for the participants; it is like going on a walk together with Jesus. For that reason, words that evoke a classroom setting should be avoided, such as “roll call” or “student.” The sessions should be conducted in the spirit of peers sharing their love for Jesus and their joy for life—never as teachers, dictators, or superiors.
7. **Welcoming new participants when possible.** Because the Biblical Mission is designed for evangelization, new participants should be welcomed during the first three sessions, as long as the site has the capacity. The evangelizers, with support from their advisers, should discern whether to place the new participants in the existing small groups or to form new groups for them.
8. **Giving and receiving advice among team members.** If a team member makes a mistake or says or does something inappropriate, address it discreetly with him or her, away from the rest of the group. If there is a need to correct something immediately, discuss the situation as soon as possible as a team and decide together what should be done. Correcting one another in front of the participants is not ideal, as this could lead to a loss of the team’s moral authority.

Guidelines for facilitating the process

1. **Organizing prior to each session.** The team meetings to organize and prepare each session are of vital importance; a disorganized team generates chaos in the biblical sessions. Merely assigning the tasks is not enough—it is important to review each activity as a team, step by step, in order to cover all the details.
2. **Respecting each other's time and space.** Whenever another team member is facilitating an activity, avoid interrupting him or her. If a mistake is made or there is confusion about the process, it is better to raise your hand or make another signal previously agreed upon by the team, reminding the facilitator what was forgotten with a question. For example: “Alex, do you think it's ok if we form the small groups first?” “Claudia, could you explain again the concept...?”
3. **Keeping the process on schedule.** Both evangelizers share responsibility for successfully carrying out the biblical session, one by facilitating the processes and the other by serving as timekeeper and assisting his or her partner. The hosts collaborate by having the materials ready and helping in whatever is needed.
4. **Learning the names of the participants.** Getting to know the names of all the participants creates a sense of trust and communicates that each participant is important. It is better to avoid the use of nicknames, unless the person really prefers it that way. You can always ask for the name again: “Please tell me your name again so that I can learn it by heart.”
5. **Respecting the participants’ opinions.** Some of the themes and reflections could lead to controversy or conflicting opinions in the group. Avoid arguing with the participants or creating conflict among them. When a disagreement starts, it is better to pause the discussion and clarify the objective of the activity:

“I understand your point of view, but at this moment what we need to do is...”
“We are participating in a Biblical Mission and we need to follow the process. If you want to continue this conversation, you may do so during the week.”

6. **Saying “I don’t know.”** If a participant asks a question that the young missionary does not know how to answer, the question should be taken in private to the other members of the team, or to an adviser or trainer if necessary. In the meantime, the best answer and the most honest one is: “I don’t know, but I will find out for you. For now, let’s continue...”
7. **Observing the actions and listening to the responses of the participants.** In general, the person facilitating an activity is only able to observe the reactions of the group as a whole. The other three members of the team, since they do not have the pressure of speaking or coordinating the process, may notice important details that should be communicated to the facilitator, so that he or she can take them into consideration. For example:
 - *Who is dominating the conversation and who seldom contributes?* It is important to encourage everyone to participate fully.
 - *What ideas were not fully explained or understood?* It may be necessary to reinforce certain points at the end of the session or in the next one.
 - *What instructions or activities are difficult for the group to follow?* It might be helpful to give a more detailed explanation, and adjustments may be needed for similar or more complicated activities.
 - *What were some important comments by the participants?* Their insights may help the young missionaries to carry out their roles more effectively.
 - *When do some people choose not to participate?* Ask them discreetly if the topic or activity is making them uncomfortable. If so, suggest alternative ways of participating, or even the possibility of temporarily excusing themselves from the group.
8. **Capturing the attention of a distracted group.** If the group or some of the participants are distracted, it might be because they are tired, they feel stressed about something in daily life, they are having trouble focusing, or other similar issues. In order to restore their attention, it may be helpful to take a short break and do a stretching exercise or sing a song with movements that will help the group to regain focus and continue with the activity. Yelling in order to recapture the attention of the group is seldom effective and should be avoided.



Guidelines for working in small groups

1. **Encouraging reflection in pairs and small groups.** Conducting reflections in pairs or small groups allows for greater participation, meeting new people, and sharing ideas, experiences, and feelings at a deeper level. In addition, it is an opportunity to exercise shared leadership and it helps the participants to complete the assigned activities in the time allotted.
2. **Forming small groups.** The *Mission Guidebook* indicates how each activity or reflection should be carried out. The participants may be assigned to work in pairs or groups of three or four. It is best to form these groups randomly in every biblical session, so that the young people can meet different peers each time.

In order to determine how many small groups to form, simply divide the number of participants by the number of people required in each group. For example, 24 participants organized into groups of three will form 8 small groups. Have the participants count off, according to the number of small groups needed. Names, letters, or colors may also be assigned.

3. **Assigning leadership roles.** Once the small groups are formed, roles should be assigned among their members, as required by the activity.
 - *Reflection facilitator.* Moderates and leads the group reflection process, ensuring that everyone has a chance to participate.
 - *Prayer facilitator.* Leads the small group prayer times, setting the right tone for the discussion that will follow. The prayer should always begin “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
 - *Timekeeper.* Makes sure that the small group activities do not run over the allotted time by alerting the facilitator when time is running out.
 - *Secretary.* Takes note of the conclusions of the group, faithfully recording what was said. Prepares to share the notes clearly and concisely in the large group, if required. Whenever possible, the small group should review the notes to confirm their accuracy before ending the reflection.
4. **Conducting large group reflections and conclusions.** When the small groups are requested to share their conclusions in the large group, each group should be allowed the same length of time for its presentation. The evangelizer who serves as a timekeeper must let the presenting secretary know how much time is allotted for sharing, giving the first signal at the half-way point, and again when there are 30 seconds remaining before it is time for the next group.
5. **Distributing and relocating participants.** If there are dating couples attending the Biblical Mission together, they should be reminded that this is not a time to isolate themselves and that their dating relationship can be enriched by getting to know people with diverse experiences. If the team notices any personality conflicts between two of the participants, it is advisable to assign them to different small groups in order to ensure a positive experience for everyone.

Guidelines for preparing the Biblical Mission sites

The preparation of the sites should be done with care in order to convey the *mística* of the Biblical Mission to the participants, with an atmosphere that is conducive to listening to God's Word and sharing faith. The location should offer a favorable setting for personal and community prayer. In fulfilling their responsibility to prepare the site, the hosts should pay careful attention to the following details:

1. **Preparing the materials for the session.** Have the Mission trunk and the session case ready with everything needed for the session. Gather the objects and symbols to be placed on the altar.
2. **Identifying the Biblical Mission site.** Place a large sign on the front wall or at the entrance of the site, welcoming everyone to the Biblical Mission. If the location is difficult to find, send out a map to the participants prior to the first session.
3. **Organizing the space.** Think about the size of the room, relative to the number of young people who will participate in the Biblical Mission. Make sure that there is enough space to comfortably carry out the activities of each session. It is usually best to start each biblical session in an informal circle, either with movable chairs or on the floor, although sitting around a table is also fine.
4. **Preparing the altar.** Place a table, desk, or board on a stand in a prominent location in the room, to be used as the altar. Cover it with a nice, clean tablecloth or fabric that will not distract from the symbols that will be positioned on it. Place the Mission Bible and Cross on it, except for the first session, when they will be enthroned as part of the process. The symbols corresponding to each session will also be placed on the altar. Make sure that there is enough space to place additional symbols or items, as indicated in the session process.
5. **Collecting the *Mission Journals*.** Bring a copy of the *Mission Journal* for each participant to the first biblical session. After that, bring the Mission chest with the participants' journals inside, as well as some extra copies in case additional young people decide to join.
6. **Bringing the snacks.** Snacks for the social should be prepared ahead of time and stored in a place where they will not distract from the process. Make sure to request simple snacks in order to avoid generating a spirit of competition among the people who are asked to provide them.



3.6 GUIDELINES FOR THE SENDING FORTH AND CLOSING LITURGIES

The ideal location for launching the Biblical Mission is in a parish—the center of liturgical life, faith formation, and pastoral care for the faith community. If this is not possible, it is suggested to launch it in a Eucharistic liturgy offered to mark the beginning of the Biblical Mission, incorporating the Rite of Sending Forth of the young missionaries at the end of Mass. Of course, it is also possible to celebrate the sending forth of the young missionaries and the closing of the Biblical Mission during a Liturgy of the Word.

During the Sending Forth Liturgy, the young missionaries receive the Lord's blessing to carry out the Biblical Mission. When the four biblical sessions are over, all of the young people—both missionaries and participants—gather to celebrate the mystery of our faith in a Closing Liturgy, sharing with the community the joy of having completed the Biblical Mission and being sent forth to shine the light of Christ throughout the area. On both occasions, the community serves as witness and joins the young people in prayer.

The Biblical Mission may be implemented at any time during the liturgical year. Some suggestions for organizing the Sending Forth and Closing Liturgies are presented below, so that they may be infused with the *mística* of the Biblical Mission. The prayers for blessing the Mission Bibles and Crosses, as well as the small crosses for the young missionaries, are also presented in this *Manual*.

Since the celebration of the Eucharist is favored for opening and closing the Biblical Mission, these guidelines were written for the Mass. Guidelines that apply to both Eucharistic celebrations are presented first. Specific guidelines for the Sending Forth and Closing Liturgies follow: (a) Prayer of the Faithful; (b) Offertory; and (c) Rite of Sending Forth. All of these may be adapted easily to a Liturgy of the Word.

General guidelines for both liturgies

Sunday is the day *par excellence* for the liturgical assembly, when Christians gather together to celebrate the Paschal Mystery, enrich our lives with the Word of God, and participate in the Eucharist. Through the liturgy, we strengthen our bonds of communion with the Lord and one another by partaking in the Body and Blood of Christ, we nurture our spiritual life and renew our commitment as missionary disciples of Jesus.

The readings in the Liturgy of the Word will be taken from the Sunday on which the Sending Forth and Closing Liturgies take place. The homily and the Rite of Sending Forth incarnate this evangelizing effort within the Sunday Eucharist.

The young missionaries may be invited to serve in the various liturgical ministries during the Mass, as appropriate or allowed: ministers of hospitality or ushers, lectors, and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. They may also take up the collection and present the gifts in the offertory. If they have musical talents, they may serve as musicians or sing with the choir. All of them should prepare in advance and arrive early.

Directives and the selection of liturgical music

Where it is the custom, the readings, the responsorial psalm, and the Gospel may be accompanied by brief introductory directives (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 35:3 and *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 13). This will help prepare the assembly to listen attentively to their message. A resource published by Saint Mary's Press, *Youth Engaging Scripture: Diving into the Sunday Gospels*, may serve as a source of inspiration so that the explanations agree with the Sunday readings.

Hymns and music are integral parts of the liturgical celebration. Songs containing missionary themes should be selected for the presentation of the gifts, the communion rite, and the end of Mass, while the young missionaries are exiting. The theme song of the First Biblical Mission, "Go Out and Tell," is an excellent choice for the end of Mass and/or during the Rite of Sending Forth of the young missionaries.

Homily

The homily is a key moment to motivate the community to bring the Word of God to life. The homilist should relate the readings—especially the Gospel—to the evangelizing mission of young people in the community, highlighting the theme of the Biblical Mission, "God's Word Comes to Life in Young People." It is also an opportune moment to motivate the young people present to participate in the Biblical Mission and to ask the adults in the community to support this project with their prayers and actions.

The presiding priest is encouraged to take time to meet with the young missionaries to reflect on the Sunday readings and identify together the messages contained in them for the young people who will be present, both for the Sending Forth and the Closing Liturgies. *Youth Engaging Scripture: Diving into the Sunday Gospels*, could serve as a resource for relating the Sunday readings to the lives of young people.

Prayer of the Faithful

The petitions written especially for the Sending Forth and Closing Liturgies of the Biblical Mission, found in their respective sections in the next few pages, may be used in their corresponding Eucharistic celebrations. The petitions found in the missal or prepared weekly by the parish may also be used, provided that they include prayers for the young missionaries and participants. If the general intercessions are to be drafted following the usual sequence of intentions, some mention of the pastoral needs of young people should be inserted into them. A few examples follow:

Invitatory: The priest invites the assembly to pray.

Intentions:

For the needs of the Church, especially the young Church:

- For the young people you call to bring the Good News to their peers, that they may respond generously to your invitation, we pray to the Lord.
- For young people who have been neglected in their faith formation, that they may encounter Jesus and his liberating love, we pray to the Lord.

For those who govern us and for the salvation of the whole world:

- For those passing laws affecting public and private education, that they may be guided in their decisions by gospel values, we pray to the Lord.

For those who find themselves in difficult or critical situations:

- For those who have fallen into the trap of alcoholism or drug addiction, that someone may be sent to help them overcome their dependency and that they may discover the willpower that only your Spirit offers, we pray to the Lord.

For the parish community:

- For the young people in this faith community, that they may become witnesses of Jesus in every circumstance of their lives, we pray to the Lord.

Conclusion: Concluding prayer

Guidelines for the Sending Forth Liturgy

The celebration of the Sending Forth Liturgy marks the beginning of the evangelizing effort spearheaded by the Teams of Young Missioners. It energizes them to invite other young people to join the Biblical Mission, sharing with them their experience of Jesus and the messages they have received during the preparation stage. Below, the special prayers and rites for this liturgy are presented in detail:

Prayer of the Faithful

Priest: Brothers and sisters, let us offer our prayer to the Father so that, filled with the Spirit, we may be joyful witnesses and respond generously to God's call through the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults that begins today in [place name].

Lector: For our Church, that by the action of the Holy Spirit we may be strengthened as a reflection of Christ and give witness to him in the world, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: Give us the light of your Spirit, so that we may discover Jesus present in the young people who will participate in the Biblical Mission and all those with whom we share life, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: Grant, by the power of Jesus Christ who lives among us and dwells in the Church throughout the world, that we may live intensely the Paschal Mystery and be strengthened in our evangelizing efforts, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: For the young missionaries, may they bring Jesus' infinite love and the Good News of salvation to their brothers and sisters, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: For the young people who will participate in the Biblical Mission, that they may find the joy of knowing God's love for them; bless them with the Holy Spirit and open their hearts to receive the Word of God, we pray to the Lord.



Lector: For all the participants in the Biblical Mission, that like our Blessed Mother Mary, they may open their hearts to the Holy Spirit and live their faith in truth and simplicity, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: For the young people in the community, that the experience of the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults may give direction to their lives and allow them to walk in friendship with Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: For all of us gathered today, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may bring the Gospel of Jesus to life in our own lives and transform the world around us, we pray to the Lord.

Priest: Loving Father, we ask you to enlighten and strengthen us, so that we may become worthy disciples and apostles of your Son. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Offertory

Along with the bread and the wine, the Mission Cross that will be enthroned at the Biblical Mission site and the crosses for the young missionaries are brought forward in the offertory. During the procession to the altar, the lector reads the following text:

Lord Jesus, we wish to be transformed in your hands like the wheat and grapes that become bread and wine, so that our lives and actions may bear witness to you during the Biblical Mission. May we become your instruments, bringing your life to the young people who will participate. We know that you have given us abundant gifts for this high purpose, and we trust in the power of your love to bring them to fruition.

Look not on our weaknesses, but only on our desire to serve you. Transform us to become bread of life and joy, so that all who experience the Biblical Mission may share your love and your Word with one another and with everyone they meet.

Rite of Sending Forth

- After communion, the priest invites the Teams of Young Missioners to stand in front of the altar, facing the community.
- The Core Team members present the Bibles and the Mission Crosses for each Biblical Mission site to the priest.
- After blessing these symbols and asking God to make them signs of the Holy Spirit's presence during the Biblical Mission, the priest gives a Bible and a Mission Cross to each missionary team.
- The young missionaries, together with the whole faith community, solemnly recite the "Mission Prayer," which is found on p. 8 of this *Manual*.
- The priest blesses the young missionaries' crosses and hands them to the Core Team to be placed around each young person's neck, saying: "Receive this cross as a sign of your call from Jesus to become a young missionary."

- The young person replies: “I receive this cross as a sign of my commitment to be a faithful disciple of Jesus and to serve him in the Biblical Mission.”
- When all of the young missionaries have received their crosses, they return to their seats.
- The priest concludes the celebration and sends the young missionaries forth to fulfill their tasks.
- The young missionaries, wearing their personal crosses, exit the church in procession, carrying the Bibles and Mission Crosses for each Biblical Mission site.

Guidelines for the Closing Liturgy

The Closing Liturgy concludes the Biblical Mission, in which the young people grew in faith, affirmed their Christian vocation, and strengthened their mission to be the light of the world. In this Eucharist, the priest sends forth all of the young people—missioners and participants alike—to carry out their evangelizing mission in daily life, encouraging them to remain active members of their faith community and celebrate with joy the gifts they received during the Biblical Mission.

As a sign of the new life they received in the Biblical Mission, some of the young participants will be selected to serve at the liturgy: bringing the gifts to the altar, reciting the prayer during the Offertory, and reading the petitions for the Prayer of the Faithful. The Core Team will assign these services to the Biblical Mission sites, and the Teams of Young Missioners will identify the young participants who will carry them out.

Prayer of the Faithful

Priest: Brothers and sisters, let us offer our prayer to the Father so that, filled with God’s Spirit, we may be joyful witnesses and bearers of his message of salvation, as a fruit of the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults that ends today in (place name).

Lector: For our Church, that by the action of the Holy Spirit we may be strengthened as a reflection of Christ and give witness to him in the world, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: For the people we will meet in our Christian journey, that we may recognize Jesus in them and generously share with them the divine love that we have received by faith as children of God, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: Grant, by the power of Jesus Christ who lives among us and dwells in the Church throughout the world, that we may live intensely the Paschal Mystery and be strengthened in our evangelizing efforts, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: For the young missionaries, that they may continue to serve their brothers and sisters with a sincere desire to bring Jesus and his Good News of salvation to them as an expression of God’s infinite love, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: For the young people who have participated in the Biblical Mission, that they may be granted the grace to rejoice always in the knowledge of God's unconditional love for them; bless them with the Holy Spirit and open their hearts to always treasure the Word of God, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: For the young people in the community, that the fruits of the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults may give direction to their lives and allow them to remain forever in friendship with Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: For all young people, that like our Blessed Mother Mary, their hearts may always remain open to the Holy Spirit so that they may live their faith in truth and simplicity, we pray to the Lord.

Lector: For all of us gathered today, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may bring the Gospel of Jesus to life in our own lives and transform the world around us, we pray to the Lord.

Priest: Loving Father, we ask you to enlighten and strengthen us, so that we may become worthy disciples and apostles of your Son. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Offertory

Along with the bread and the wine, the chests containing the participants' *Journals* are brought forward in the offertory and placed at the foot of the altar, as a symbol of their experience of the Biblical Mission and their desire to continue living as disciples of Jesus. During the procession to the altar, the lector reads the following text:

Lord Jesus, we want to continue being transformed in your hands like the wheat and grapes that become bread and wine, so that our presence and actions may be a source of life for everyone we meet. During the Biblical Mission our faith in you grew stronger, just like our confidence in ourselves as sons and daughters of God. We gained new insight into our Christian vocation, and we left with the firm intention of becoming better disciples to you.

We present these *Mission Journals* to you as a sign of our hope, as well as our love for you and for our brothers and sisters. We offer them together with the bread and wine, so that by our testimony in word and deed, "God's Word Comes to Life in Young People."

Rite of Sending Forth

- After the communion rite, the presiding priest invites the Teams of Young Missioners to spread out throughout the church and remain standing while a representative from each team approaches the altar.
- A member of the Core Team goes to the front and invites all of the young participants in the Biblical Mission to stand and silently pray the words of the "Commitment Prayer" while he or she reads it. The prayer is found on p. 80.

- The presiding priest does the following:
 - Blesses the chests containing the *Mission Journals*, so that the spiritual riches acquired during the Biblical Mission and recorded in the *Journals* may last and bear abundant fruit.
 - Hands each chest to the representative from the corresponding Biblical Mission site, indicating that she or he may return to stand with the team.
 - Instructs the young participants to receive their *Journal*, return to their place, and remain standing.

- When all of the young people have received their *Journals*, the presiding priest asks them to bow their heads and invites the assembly to extend their hands while he prays:

Ever-loving Father, bless these young people whom you have chosen to be enriched with your Word. Grant them the strength of your Spirit so that each day they may become better followers of Jesus and builders of your Kingdom. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, together with our Mother Mary, who is our companion in the journey of life.

- The young people answer, “Amen. May it be done to me according to your Word.”

- The priest concludes the celebration with the final blessing over the people and sends the young people forth to continue living the Biblical Mission in their daily lives, so that “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People.”



COMMITMENT PRAYER

"WE WANT TO SHARE GOD'S WORD"

We give you thanks, Lord Jesus,
for our deep personal encounter with the Word of God.

We listened to it from the heart
and it has penetrated our entire being.
We have heard, seen, and experienced
how God's Word comes to life in young people.

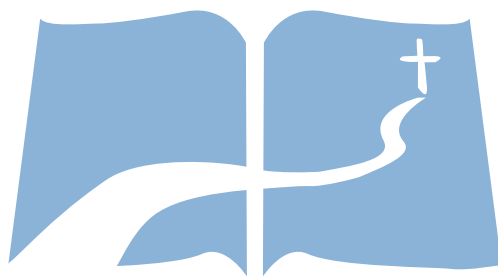
Now, each one of us knows you better
because you are our Teacher.
The Word has the power to transform our lives,
and it helps us to mature as Christians.

Today we hear your invitation
to bring the Word of God into our world:
to our families, our school, our workplace, our friends...
so that everyone may find new life in you.

Our great desire is that, through us,
the people we meet may see, hear, and experience
how God's Word comes to life in young people.

Bless us and help us to accomplish this,
in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.



3.7 EVALUATION OF THE BIBLICAL MISSION

The evaluation, as indicated when describing the Pastoral Circle, is an essential element of the whole pastoral project. It provides an opportunity to review the activities carried out and to visualize any changes that may be needed in future Biblical Missions. These evaluations are conducted in a variety of ways; sometimes they cover specific details, and at other times they may elicit a deep reflection about the project as a whole.

In general, two modes of evaluation are employed: *personal* and *communal*, which will be presented below. It is also possible to view the evaluation from the perspective of personal growth and as a tool to improve pastoral outreach, which is addressed briefly thereafter.

Evaluating for personal growth and to improve pastoral outreach

Personal evaluation is a very important first step toward carrying out a good communal evaluation. It allows for individual reflection on the quality of the team efforts, based on personal experience, using the gifts and talents of each member of the pastoral team. Communal evaluation is also necessary, since it offers a broader perspective than the individual evaluation. It also benefits from a variety of viewpoints that allow the community to become aware of the impact of personal actions on a community or team when practicing shared leadership.

This dual evaluation makes it possible to develop a better understanding of the setting in which the work is performed and the young people who were the recipients of this pastoral outreach. It also provides another occasion to recognize and celebrate the fruits and the challenges that were overcome in this missionary action, as well as to identify new opportunities to pursue for the sake of the Kingdom of God, in our journey as missionary disciples in the vineyard of the Lord.

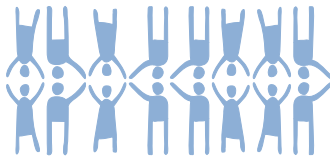
Evaluating our actions from the perspective of Jesus' teachings is always a source of personal growth. When it is done in our daily life, it usually takes the form of an examination of conscience. When the evaluation has to do with a pastoral activity, it is important to analyze our intentions and our effectiveness in carrying them out. This reflection will help us in three distinct ways: to grow as a person, to develop our Christian spirituality, and to improve our pastoral outreach.



Evaluation of the Biblical Mission by the young missionaries

In the Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults project, there are four instances in which the young missionaries carry out a personal and communal evaluation:

- During the Experience of the Biblical Mission, the young missionaries evaluate the outcomes of each biblical session, illustrating them with key symbols and words drawn or written on their personal Mission cross. These moments allow them to capture the main fruits of each biblical session through symbols and words.
- Reviewing their personal *Journal* while studying the *Mission Guidebook* allows them to reflect on their own experience of the four biblical sessions, evaluating the extent to which the session's objectives were realized in their own life and whether the life-giving messages reached their heart. This evaluation will benefit them greatly when it is time to carry out their role as evangelizer or host.
- After conducting each biblical session, they will do a formal evaluation that includes both personal and communal dimensions. These evaluations will help them to improve their pastoral outreach in the following sessions, as well as in future activities of a similar nature in which they might serve as leaders.
- At the end of the entire Biblical Mission project, there will be an opportunity to reflect on the quality of the pastoral activity in each stage. At that time, they will review their pastoral efforts as young missionaries, as well as their participation in the formative processes and collaboration with the Core Team. In this way, they will obtain a broader perspective on the Biblical Mission, including its outcomes, challenges, and new pastoral opportunities that arose. All in all, the Biblical Mission is a source of personal growth for the young missionaries, as well as a valuable foundation for improving their personal and communal pastoral efforts.



**THEME SONG OF THE FIRST CONTINENTAL BIBLICAL
MISSION FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS
"GO OUT AND TELL"**

Bobby Fisher/Greg Lee

Refrain

Go out and tell, make disciples of nations.
Go out and tell the good news.
Sing from your heart, sing to all of creation.
Go out and tell the good news.

Go out and tell (God's love is everlasting.)
Go out and tell (He is a loving friend.)
Go out and tell (He'll never leave you orphaned.)
Shout it from the mountains,
let the Word be alive in you.

Go out and tell (Give food to the hungry.)
Go out and tell (Be compassion to the poor.)
Go out and tell (Be a friend to the lonely.)
Come down from the mountain,
let the Word be alive in you.

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