

Why Do Some Inactive Catholics Return to the Church?

Those who reach out to inactive Catholics have noticed several positive reasons why some people return to the Church. The following is but a partial list:

- Searching for meaning and purpose in life
- Seeking the simplicity of God's love that was experienced in childhood
- Wanting forgiveness for sins and relief from guilt
- Needing Christ's help to forgive others for actual and perceived hurts
- Desiring to be healed by Jesus emotionally, mentally, or physically
- Coming to believe that the Catholic Church has the fullness of truth
- Hoping for their children to have faith-filled and moral lives
- Wishing to bring spiritual unity to their marriage and/or family
- Yearning to belong to a faith community around the person of Christ
- Longing to make a difference, to help other people in need
- Craving to receive the Eucharist again
- Responding to someone they trust who personally invites them to return

Individual Activity (3-5 mins.):

1. Which two or three of these come close to your own reasons for remaining an active Catholic? Why did you choose these?
2. Mentally pick out one or two inactive Catholic family members, friends, acquaintances, or co-workers with whom you have regular contact. Which two or three reasons for returning might appeal to him or her?
3. In what concrete and creative ways might we conduct a tightly focused outreach to the particular kind of inactive Catholic(s) that you chose in number 2—inviting him or her to consider **only one or two of the good reasons** for returning at this time?

Small Group Sharing (25 mins.):

1. In groups of three or four people, share your answers to numbers 1 and 2.
2. After 20 minutes, share your “concrete and creative ways” from #3.

Large Group Summary—on white/chalk board or newsprint (10-15 mins.):

1. List the “concrete and creative ways” the groups have generated.
2. Choose one of these ways to start working on today (i.e., one that is measurable and possible for your group or parish to attempt at this time, given the available resources).