



FACILITATION TOOLS for a Missionary Conversion of Christian Life Formation

*Be daring,
get involved!*



Assemblée des
évêques catholiques
du Québec



TRIPARTITE REFLECTION GROUP
ON THE FUTURE PATHS OF
CHRISTIAN LIFE FORMATION

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for a Missionary
Conversion of Christian
Life Formation

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OUR TEAM

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OUR LEARNING ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

Introduction

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITIES AND APPROACH

- Where do they stem from?
- For whom and to what end were they written?
- What do they consist of?
- How do we use them?

Where do we stand?

OBJECTIVES

- To embrace the current ecclesiastical reflection on missionary conversion.
- To let yourself be challenged by this reflection, both personally and as part of a group.



A
MODULE

APPROACH OUTLINE

1. Questioning our practices in the field: some personal accounts.
2. Where do we stand? Excerpts from Church documents that shed light on the motives and context of current ecclesial thinking.
3. A missionary conversion: what are we talking about? Some ideas to conceptualize what these words evoke and to clarify their meaning in the context of the ongoing reflection.
4. The “missionary outreach” called for through the Word of God: a selection of Bible passages to be read and discussed in a meaningful way with one another.
5. Assessment of the progress made in this module.

👉 | pages
1 to 10

⌚ | Approximate duration of this process • 2-3 hours

What are we bridging?

OBJECTIVES

- Become empowered to better express ourselves, embrace who we are, and receive others.
- Achieve greater understanding in the face of change.
- Welcome change as a process of transition or conversion which calls us to delve deeper into our identity and potential as disciples of Christ.



B

MODULE

APPROACH OUTLINE

1. Getting started: the four tasks that foster a process of change.
2. FEEL: two exercises to identify feelings and emotions, followed by sharing.
3. ADJUST: an individual exercise, followed by a discussion.
4. Time to listen to the Word: a biblical meditation session is suggested with a video presentation (multimedia equipment required).
5. Review the ground covered in this module and leap to the next stage: REINVESTING YOURSELF.



Pages
1 to 8

Approximate duration of this process • 2-3 hours

What's our destination?

OBJECTIVES

- Let ourselves be challenged by testimonies and milestones that can enlighten a missionary conversion of Christian life formation.
- Develop a missionary vision of Christian life formation on both a personal level and as part of a team.
- Identify the transformations to be carried out in our community on Christian life formation based on this vision.



C

MODULE

APPROACH OUTLINE

1. Getting started.
2. Various paths of missionary conversion of Christian life formation: some personal accounts followed by an assessment of the insights they provide.
3. Reference points for a missionary vision of Christian life formation: a presentation followed by a review of the testimonies in the light of these reference points.
4. Formulating a missionary vision of Christian life formation inspired by these milestones.
5. Start thinking on how to act locally.



Pages
1 to 16

Approximate duration of this process • 3.5 hours to an entire day • Depending on circumstances and needs, the approach proposed in this module can be completed in a single day, or in a few half-day or evening workshops.

How to act locally?

OBJECTIVES

- As a team, identify and plan the desired transformations needed to implement a more missionary Christian life formation in one's community.
- Experiment with the changes considered while staying receptive to the Holy Spirit.



D

MODULE

APPROACH OUTLINE

1. Where do we begin? A critical and constructive look at our practices: a worksheet for personal reflection and interaction.
2. Time for listening to the Word of God and prayer.
3. Plan the changes to be brought. Planning tool to work on individually followed by a group discussion in view of an informed judgment.



pages
1 to 6

Approximate duration of this process • A minimum of 3.5 hours

A little higher, a little further

OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate the transformations carried out and review the missionary conversion journey undertaken.
- Aim for continuous improvement and constantly adjust to changing circumstances.



E

MODULE

APPROACH OUTLINE

0. Preliminary step (optional): Individual assessment of the frames of mind and positions regarding catechism as experienced in a meeting.
1. Evaluation of the tried and tested practices or project followed by a review of the journey traveled: personal reflection using an evaluation worksheet, a group discussion, and a review in the light of God's word.
2. Ceaselessly working towards a missionary conversion: discussion.



pages
1 to 8

Approximate duration of this approach (steps 2 and 3, the preliminary step is not included in this approximation of the duration) • **between 2 and 3 hours**



Introduction

“ Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: ‘We have always done it this way’. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities.¹ ”

The following handbook was written in response to Pope Francis’ appeal in his apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*. Its aim is to enkindle and guide a process of missionary conversion in teaching Christian life in our communities. It is well adapted to be used in teams on local, regional or even diocesan levels. It is composed of five modules which can be covered in any order as they provide users with multiple starting points and courses of action.

FACILITATION TOOLS...

Where do they stem from?

The outreach tools proposed in this handbook are the result of a concerted effort led by the Tripartite Group³ tasked with contemplating on the future of Christian life formation. The group was created in 2015 with the mandate to “identify the markers that can help us adjust our vision and catechetical practices according to the new evangelization.”⁴ The group organized a symposium in 2017 entitled “At the Heart of Faith: The Mission! Taking the missionary turn in Christian faith education.”⁵ Immediately following this event, different workshops continue the coordination and training tasks regarding the missionary conversion of Christian faith education. The approach proposed here is intended to encourage and support similar initiatives.

For whom and to what end were they written?

This handbook aims to foster questioning, reflection and insight by engaging everyone individually in dialogue. It is intended for people committed to Christian faith education in dioceses or parishes, whether they are paid or not, mandated or not. **It can equally inspire reflection among individuals and teams involved in other aspects of the local and diocesan Church’s work, promoting an open approach to working towards missionary conversion.**



Since the publication of the bishops’ orientation material⁶ in 2004, Christian faith education aims to broaden our perception of the meaning of catechesis by effectively integrating the three dimension of awakening, initiation and lifelong learning. The document also highlights that catechesis is available in different formats able to cater to people of all ages.

¹ POPE FRANCIS, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel) on the proclamation of the Gospel in today’s world*, n° 33.

² For more details on the recent events that have benefited these facilitation tools, a brief background can be found in the annex on, page 5 of the Introduction.

³ Group of delegates from the AECQ’s *Evangelization and Christian Life Council*, the *Regroupement des responsables diocésains de la formation à la vie chrétienne*, and the *Office de catéchèse du Québec*.

⁴ General mandate of the TRIPARTITE REFLECTION GROUP ON THE FUTURE PATHS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE FORMATION, January 22, 2015.

⁵ Conference held in partnership with Laval University. For further information on this event, the OCQ website at www.officedecatechese.qc.ca/ under the heading « *Tournant missionnaire/Colloque 2017* », and click the tab « *Aide aux catéchètes* ».

⁶ Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops, *Jesus Christ, the Way to Humanization: Orientations for the Training and Development of a Christian Life*, Montreal, Médiaspaul, 2004.



WHAT DO THEY CONSIST OF?

This handbook proposes an approach to stimulate personal reflection and group discussions, nurtured by the Word of God and challenged by *The Joy of the Gospel*.

Our five modules allow for reflection and can be accessed independently depending on the group's concerns and/or objectives.⁷

| | |
|---------------|---|
| A | Where do we stand? |
| MODULE | <p>OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To embrace the ongoing ecclesial reflection on missionary conversion for Christian faith education. • To let yourself be challenged by this reflection, both personally and as part of a group. |
| B | What are we bridging? |
| MODULE | <p>OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become empowered to better express ourselves, embrace who we are, and receive others. • Achieve greater understanding in the face of change. • Welcome change as a process of transition or conversion which calls us to delve deeper into our identity and potential as disciples of Christ. |
| C | What is our destination? |
| MODULE | <p>OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let ourselves be challenged by testimonies and milestones that can enlighten a missionary conversion of Christian faith education. • Develop a missionary vision of Christian faith education on both a personal level and as part of a team. • Identify the transformations to be carried out in our community on Christian faith education based on this vision. |
| D | How to act locally? |
| MODULE | <p>OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a team, identify and plan the desired transformations needed to implement a more missionary Christian faith education in one's community. • Experiment with the changes considered while staying receptive to the Holy Spirit. |
| E | A little higher, a little further |
| MODULE | <p>OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the transformations carried out and review the missionary conversion journey undertaken. • Aim for continuous improvement and constantly adjust to changing circumstances. |

⁷ For further details look at the section under the heading [Our Learning Activities at a Glance](#).



Each module contains:

- an introduction to the module;
- the proposed approach for reflection and discussion; and
- resources to go further.

HOW TO USE IT

This set of activities is designed to be flexible to use as it can be adapted to the group's needs and circumstances.

An approach to be experienced with others

It can be used individually, but it will produce more results in a group setting. Each module can be a source of inspiration on how to conduct and tailor meeting activities in a diocese or community according to their specific needs.

An approach based on adult education

As this set of tools is intended for individuals or groups of adults, it is modeled to reflect the main principles of andragogy: voluntary participation, a spirit of collaboration with respect for others, critical reflection relating to action or experience, and autonomy⁸.

An enlightened approach through missionary conversion



Missionary conversion... what does it mean⁹?

Missionary conversion is a lifelong process which calls the Church to return to the sources, to that dynamism which she has received from the Holy Spirit to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth, thus participating in Christ's mission: "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize."¹⁰

This missionary calling invites each baptized person and the whole Church to stand as a witness of God, through their words, actions and way of living "the joy of the Gospel that fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus."¹¹

The approach proposed by these tools is itself inspired by the very characteristics of the missionary conversion it seeks to support:

It respects the **freedom** of conversion, which is made possible through a desire to be faithful to Christ and to the world in which we live. It is therefore by no means a question of imposing a change from "above" under authority and coercion.

Conversion being a **gift from God** to acknowledge and embrace, the process is rooted in being attentive to the Word of God in the Scriptures, in the "the signs of the times" and in our interactions, open to the Holy Spirit, who guides it and "blows where it wants" (Jn 3:8).

The process of change requires **time and growth**. This assertion implies a degree of flexibility needed to adapt to the unpredictable patterns of progress, standstills, or even setbacks. It is not necessary to do all the modules or to go through them in the order in which they are presented. It is a matter of being in tune with your own concerns while considering the questions raised in the light of both individual and group progress.

Finally, since the missionary conversion to which we are called is a process of **lifelong transformation**, we will never be done with letting ourselves be transformed by Christ and his Gospel. It will always be possible and even recommended to come back to any module to further the discussions as there are suggested resources for this purpose.

⁸ See COMITÉ DE L'ÉDUCATION CHRÉTIENNE OF THE ASSEMBLY OF QUEBEC CATHOLIC BISHOPS, *REGROUPEMENT DES RESPONSABLES DIOCÉSAINS DE LA FORMATION À LA VIE CHRÉTIENNE ET OFFICE DE CATÉCHÈSE DU QUÉBEC*, *Chemins de foi. Guide pour la formation des adultes à la vie chrétienne*, published by l'Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2008, p. 29-30.

⁹ The process discussed in [Module A: Where do we Stand?](#) provides further understanding of this expression.

¹⁰ PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi (On Evangelization in the Modern World)*, 1975, n° 15.

¹¹ POPE FRANCIS, *Op. cit.*, n° 1.



INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

1. Specifying the modalities of use: by whom? how? when?

The facilitation approaches proposed in this guide are ideally suited for a group of 4 or 5 members. They should be tailored for larger groups, for instance, by proposing to break up into smaller teams during discussion periods.

Each module can be the subject of at least one meeting, the approximate duration of which is indicated for each module at the end of the approach outlines found in the section: [OUR LEARNING ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE](#).

2. Choose the module(s): where to start?

By reading the **objectives** presented for each of the modules (in [OUR LEARNING ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE](#) section), you can readily identify which one to start with, or anticipate which ones will best suit the needs of the people participating.

In addition, by reading the **presentation** of each module, you will be able to specify or revise this choice, either personally or as a team, before committing yourselves to the process of reflection and discussion. Feel free to browse through the brief testimonies, as they reveal different rationales or concerns¹² that can be addressed in this module.

3. Establish the facilitation procedures for each module

For each module, the reflection and discussion process begins with a summary of the proposed steps as well as an estimated time frame. Once a module has been chosen, it is important to review the summary to determine how it will be presented within the suggested approximate time frame. Do we want to work through all the proposed steps? If not, which ones will be the most appropriate? How much time do we have available?

In each module, simple facilitation instructions are suggested. In most cases, a person from the group can act as a moderator. [Module A: Where do we Stand?](#) provides some basic instructions¹³ that can be used to facilitate all the modules.

While the format and approach proposed by each module are specific to it according to its objectives, particular attention must be paid to the facilitation of [Module C: What's our destination?](#) which addresses more theological content. Consequently, the presence of a person minimally trained in theology would be an asset in supporting the facilitation of this module by providing guidance or insight if necessary.

The Reflection Group on Future Paths of Christian life formation wishes
you a good and successful journey.

*Animated by the breath of Pentecost,
we can BE DARING!*

¹² The approach proposed in this document, based on the concerns and motivations for change, is based on the work of a team of professors at HEC Montréal, who believe that the changes that are most likely to succeed are those that take into account the concerns and acceptance of those affected.

As a result, people affected by change would tend to react according to a process that involves seven phases of concern, ranging from resistance to support. To learn more about this work, here are two interesting resources:

Céline BAREIL, « *Démystifier la résistance au changement : questions, constats et implications sur l'expérience du changement* », *Télescope*, Fall 2008, pages 89-105. [Online] [www.telescope.enap.ca/Telescope/docs/Index/Vol_14_no_3/Telv14n3_Bareil.pdf]; look at the table on the seven stages of change presented in this article on pages 94-95.

Sophie MEUNIER, Céline BAREIL and André SAVOIE, « *Phases de préoccupations et comportements de soutien et de résistance au changement* » : [Online] [web.hec.ca/sites/ceto/fichiers/seminaire_meunier_bareil_savoie.pdf]

¹³ [Module A: Where do we stand?](#) p. 3.



ANNEX

The Genesis of the Recent Reflection on the Missionary Turn of Our Church

All these facilitation resources are one of the achievements of the reflection and mobilization of the Church in our province. Outlined below are some of the significant events that have taken place elsewhere and here.

2012 • A synod on “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith” is convened in order to be “attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who helps us together to read the signs of the times”¹⁴ in a world that is changing more and more rapidly.

2013 • Following this Synod, Pope Francis wrote a text on the proclamation of the Gospel in today’s world, entitled *The Joy of the Gospel*. He is calling “the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by the joy of the Gospel, while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in years to come.”¹⁵ The Church of this land is fully mobilized in response to Pope Francis’ invitation.

2015 • With regard to Christian life formation, the Tripartite Group¹⁶ is mandated to “identify guidelines that can be used to adjust our catechetical vision and practices to the context of the new evangelization.”¹⁷ It does this by leading a reflection in which members of partner organizations, namely diocesan leaders in Christian life formation and members of the *conseil Évangélisation et vie chrétienne* [Evangelization and Christian Life Council] of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Quebec, will participate.

2016 • The conseil Communautés et ministères [Communities and Ministries Council] of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Quebec published *The Missionary Shift of Christian Communities, Becoming a “Church of Outreach” After the Joy of the Gospel*¹⁷. This handbook has given rise to many meetings to raise awareness and work in the various dioceses and parishes of Quebec.

2017 • A conference on the theme brought together 400 people in Quebec City under the theme “In the Heart of Faith: Mission! Taking the Missionary Turn in Formation to Christian Life.”¹⁹ It was preceded by regional and diocesan forums promoting the participation of a greater number of people from different communities. In the spirit of this event, other activities follow to continue the work of facilitation and formation on the missionary conversion in Christian life formation.

¹⁴ POPE FRANCIS, *Op. cit.*, n° 14.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, n° 1.

¹⁶ Reflection group on the future paths of Christian life formation, made up of delegates from the Evangelization and Christian Life Council of the Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops, an association of diocesan leaders in charge of Christian life formation, and the *Office de catéchèse du Québec*.

¹⁷ *General mandate of the Tripartite Reflection Group on Future Paths in Christian Life Formation*, January 22, 2015.

¹⁸ CONSEIL COMMUNAUTÉS ET MINISTÈRES of the AOCB *The Missionary Shift of Christian Communities*, January 2016: [Oline] [www.evequescatholiques.quebec/sn_uploads/TheMissionaryShift-February2016.pdf].

¹⁹ Conference organized by the Tripartite Group in partnership with the University of Laval. To learn more about this event and its achievements, see the section “*Tournant missionnaire/Colloque 2017*” under the tab “*Aide aux catéchètes*” on the OCQ website: [www.officedecatechese.qc.ca/formation/mission/index.html].

*Be daring,
get involved!*

FACILITATION TOOLS
for a Missionary Conversion
of Christian Life Formation

A

MODULE

Where do we stand?



TRIPARTITE REFLECTION GROUP
ON THE FUTURE PATHS OF
CHRISTIAN LIFE FORMATION



Where do we stand?

A

MODULE

OBJECTIVES

- To embrace the ongoing ecclesial reflection on the missionary conversion of Christian life formation.
- To let yourself be challenged by this reflection, both personally and as part of a group.



If it has not already been done, we have much to gain by reading the [introduction](#) to the handbook, which answers among other questions, "How to use it?".



LEAD-IN



To be read, alone or as a group, to determine if you wish to follow the proposed process of reflection and discussion for this module.

For some time now, Pope Francis' appeal in his letter, *The Joy of the Gospel*, to "go forth from our own comfort zones in order to reach all the communities in need of the light of the Gospel"¹ has been reverberating in various ways. This appeal is addressed to all the baptized persons as well as to the various Christian communities. In our province, an extensive awareness and mobilization campaign has been launched to "take the missionary turn in the formation of Christian life."² The fact that "we can no longer continue as before; we have to do things differently" has become a topic constant discussion.

Many people wonder...

"Is this a new fad where we have to change just for the sake of changing?"

"Do we have to change because the pope is asking us to under his authority."

"Why bother changing if what we're doing is already good?"

"Why can't we just continue as before if we still reach people with our current ways of doing things?"

"Is it about making a 'marketing shift' or about changing our image to better conform to the present trends."

And I...

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¹ POPE FRANCIS, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)* on the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world, n° 20.

² Topic of the conference held at Laval University in August 2017. Consult the annex on page 5 of the introduction under the heading *The Genesis of the Recent Reflection on the Missionary Turn of Our Church*.

Others believe



- How do you react to these words?
- In which question(s) or concern(s) do you recognize yourself most?

If you are one of these people who find that participating in this missionary conversion movement is not self-evident or who need to become more aware of it before taking a stand, this module is for you.

The following process will allow you to get in touch with different elements of reflection allowing you to see more clearly what is meant by missionary conversion and the various reasons for joining it. These elements of reflection draw on different sources (personal accounts from people in the field, excerpts from Church documents, biblical texts) that you can explore further, if necessary, guided by the "Resources for Going Further" suggested at the end of the module.

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION PROCEDURE

Various points for reflection are suggested to be read on your own and discussed with others. You can choose to go through this process in the order of the proposed steps or start with the section that interests you most, even if it means having to come back to other elements later on.



OUTLINE OF THE APPROACH

1. Questioning our practices in the field: some personal accounts.
2. Where do we stand? Excerpts from Church documents that shed light on the motives and context of current ecclesial thinking.
3. A missionary conversion: what are we talking about? Some ideas to conceptualize what these words evoke and to clarify their meaning in the context of the ongoing reflection.
4. The “missionary outreach” called for through the Word of God: a selection of Bible passages to be read and discussed in a meaningful way with one another.
5. Assessment of the progress made in this module.



Approximate duration of this process • 2-3 hours



A few simple guidelines for a fruitful discussion

1. As a starting point, an exercise in listening where we encourage everyone in the group to take the floor briefly for 2 minutes to make a personal statement without any team feedback.
2. In the next stage, we engage into open dialogue while maintaining a good flow of communication by assuring that nobody monopolizes the conversation in a spirit of mutual listening.
3. It would be wise to appoint a group member as a facilitator while ensuring that he or she can also speak on the same terms as the others. His or her role is to promote a better flow of communication by complying with these guidelines.

1. Questioning our practices in the field

Here are some testimonies or personal stories from people working in the field who are questioning themselves or considering a change in their approach:

“ Our human and material resources are decreasing from year to year. We need to review our ways of doing things to continue the mission. Should we integrate the different catechetical paths to pool our strengths and walk together? Maybe by bringing the generations, we could evangelize each other... ”

“ Our catechetical model is no longer suitable to the requirements of the people who are knocking on our door. We are providing them with a lot of content in our catechesis, but they are at the stage of spiritual awakening. We must acknowledge this divide and figure out how to receive them in their current situation. ”

“ I am thinking of Sara, a preadolescent girl from my parish in the east end of Montreal, who has received confirmation last year and who was previously one of part of my catechesis group. She is a member of the Mass attendants and readers' club. So, I see her with her mother frequently at the Eucharist. Nonetheless, I have experienced a world marked by the omnipresence of Christian symbols and rites that is not at all Sara's. Sara doesn't watch Bible movies on TV during Holy Week. She has never run into our priest outside the church. [...] I let Sara, the other kids and their parents push me around. I experienced the twelve meetings of this year's catechesis in an uncomfortable atmosphere from which I did not want to escape. I felt overwhelmed by the book and the method I had to follow. All too often, I had the impression that we avoided talking about the purpose of what we were doing together. [...] In Sara and her friends' world, social pressure is exerted in the opposite direction of religious affiliation such that the rituals and symbols of Christianity leave only but a faint imprint on daily life.



It is not necessary to be a believer to be generous and selfless, to show moral sense or to have a happy life. So, what is believing? Why believe? What difference can it make in real life at the heart of a secularized and ultra modern society like Quebec?³ “

“ During a workshop I attended, I was overwhelmed by the Word of God. I came back with a new perspective on how we adhere to Christ's mission, since it is not our mission, but his own⁴ as He humbled Himself by becoming a servant of all (Phil 2:7). Paul's letter to the Philippians⁵ completely shake up our reference points and our ecclesiastical stance when we attribute to ourselves the power of imposing external rules and obligations. I feel called upon to go beyond the logic of the Law and rule to enter into the logic of gratitude and self-sacrifice, based on freedom. This means that in formation for Christian life we must agree to suggest and guide without imposing. This requires me to search for ways to transform my attitudes and ways of doing things which are inconsistent with Christ's own attitude. As Pope Francis states in *The Joy of the Gospel*: 'Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems.'⁶ “



After having read these testimonies, either individually or together, engage in an discussion.

- Which testimony touched you, challenged you?
- How so?

2. What's our starting point?

By reading *The Joy of the Gospel*, we can better appreciate the extent of the what the Church has been called upon to do. It is not a matter of renovating a Church that is aging and losing its popularity in order to adapt it to the tastes of the day or to restore its image. Rather, it is a matter of letting ourselves be drawn into the heart of our faith, as if we were discovering it for the first time: in Jesus Christ, God 'makes all things new' (REV 21:5) This is why Pope Francis is resuming the work based on the intuitive insight of the Second Vatican Council to speak of a missionary conversion, in other words, of a permanent state of mission.

“ The Second Vatican Council presented ecclesial conversion as the introduction to a constant self-renewal born of fidelity to Jesus Christ: 'Every renewal of the Church essentially consists in an increase of fidelity to her own calling... Christ summons the Church as she goes her pilgrim way... to that continual reformation of which she always has need, in so far as she is a human institution here on earth.'⁷ “

“ I hope that all communities will ensure the implementation of the necessary means to move forward on the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion, which cannot leave matters the as they are. What we need goes beyond mere administration. Let us be 'permanently in a state of mission'⁸ in every part of the world. “

³ Sophie TREMBLAY, « *Se savoir précédés, voyager léger* », dans Suzanne DESROCHERS et Yves GUÉRETTE (dir.), *Au cœur de la foi, la mission!* Proceedings of the conference *Prendre le tournant missionnaire en formation à la vie chrétienne*, Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2018, p. 19. This publication can be purchased on the OCQ website: [www.officedecatechese.qc.ca/formation/mission/actes.html].

⁴ “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, DECREE *AD GENTES*, ON THE MISSION ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH, n° 2.

⁵ “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.” (Ph 2:5-8)

⁶ POPE FRANCIS, *Op. cit.*, n° 47.

⁷ *Ibid.*, n° 26, citing the *Decree on Ecumenism* Unitatis redintegratio, n° 6.

⁸ *Ibid.*, n° 25.



Echoing Pope Francis' call, the Bishops of Quebec are encouraging Christian communities and baptized people to take on the challenges of a missionary Church in our current world⁹:

“ Despite the current challenges, we believe that the wind of Pentecost¹⁰ can once again invade and renew the churches of Quebec provided that we are willing to welcome this mighty wind that shakes the house-Church and that we are ready to make a missionary conversion that the Spirit Himself will inspire. [...] In the ‘new world’ we are living in today, we have to continue their activity [in reference to the missionaries of the past] with the same daring, the same taste for adventure, the same faith so as to go out into the world and become a Church of outreach; a Church that is regaining its missionary nature. This ecclesial renewal, this missionary conversion cannot be postponed ¹¹. ”



After reading these excerpts, either individually or collectively, discuss them.

- What's your reaction to these invitations to act?
- What is it that touches you? What are you worried about or preoccupied with? What are you wondering about?

3. A missionary conversion: what are we talking about?

The ongoing ecclesial reflection focuses on missionary conversion, which is referred to in various ways. For instance, in the quotations taken from *The Joy of the Gospel* above, Pope Francis speaks of conversion, renewal, and reform. In the document *The Missionary Turning Point of the Christian Communities*¹², the Bishops of Quebec use the term “missionary turning point”. How should we interpret it? What is behind the choice of words? Upon hearing these words, what images emerge in our minds?

3.1. Two exercises to choose from



Here are two exercises to become aware of the diversity of images evoked by the expression “missionary conversion”: a brainstorming session OR the reading of some examples.

Brainstorming



For each of the following words, articulate (on paper or aloud) the images that spontaneously come to mind. Allow 1 minute for each word.

Mission

Missionary

Conversion

| | | |
|-------|-------|-------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

⁹ Taken from *The Missionary Shift of Christian Communities, becoming a “Church of outreach” after The Joy of the Gospel*, published by the CONSEIL COMMUNAUTÉS ET MINISTÈRES of The Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops, January 2016. Available online [www.eveques.qc.ca/fr/news-item/le-tournant-missionnaire-des-communautes-chretiennes-devenir-une-eglise-en-sortie-a-la-suite-de-la-joie-de-l-evangile].

¹⁰ See *Acts of the Apostles*, chapter 2.

¹¹ POPE FRANCIS, *Op. cit.*, n° 27.

¹² CONSEIL COMMUNAUTÉS ET MINISTÈRES of The Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops, *Op. cit.*



A few examples



Individually or as a group, take a look at some of the following examples illustrating various images associated with the words from the previous exercise.

“Whenever I hear the word ‘conversion,’ I think of the conversion of measurements for different purposes such as cooking, chemistry, and driving. It was a moment of conversion to change from the British Imperial System I learnt in childhood to the Metric System!”

“By searching on Wikipedia, I found the following definition: The word **conversion** refers to the action of changing one thing into another (to convert) or the result of this action.”

“I know a colleague who has recently converted to the Christian religion. I think **conversion** is about changing religions, or adopting religious beliefs that you didn’t have before.”

“At work, we speak of **mission** as a responsibility entrusted to someone to accomplish something. It is also a goal or an important task that you have personally undertaken.”

“I find that the words **conversion** and **shift** are similar: one can experience a conversion or a major shift in one’s life or in a project. For me, these two words refer to a major change, a profound and lasting transformation without looking back.”

“When I hear the words **mission** and **missionary**, I immediately think of those men and women who crossed the Atlantic to bring the Gospel to the Americas and who have marked our history.”

“Like many organizations and businesses, our team has recently defined its mission statement in which we have clarified our vision, objectives and strategies for increased growth in the current landscapes.”

“I looked up the word **missionary** in the dictionary and it is defined as a person whose mission is to propagate his religion or who seeks to convert others to a religion. With regard to the word **mission**, the Petit Robert defines it as being the task of propagating a religion or religious propaganda.”



Discussion

- Which images or words best work for you?
- Do any others come to mind?

3.2. Clarifying the expression *missionary conversion*

The exercise you have just completed shows that, within varying degrees of awareness, different images permeate our personal and collective memory which guide our understanding of words. Some images may shed light on the proposed reflection process, but others may lead to misinterpretations. It is therefore better to shed some light on this issue by clarifying the use of the term “missionary conversion” in this handbook.

¹³ Le Petit Robert 2011.



To be read individually or as a group; a discussion will then be suggested.

It's actually not...

In this handbook, the use of the words *mission*, *missionary* does not refer to...

- ... a goal or task that you set for yourself personally or as an organization.
- ... a responsibility related to an office, function or role, even religious;
- ... an activity which would only involve specially authorized persons or which are sent elsewhere, to other countries;
- ... religious propaganda activity intended to convince or recruit.

It's more a matter of...



“ Indeed, the initiative for missionary outreach does not come from the Church. If the word mission in the strict sense means “the act of sending,” the doer of this action is God who sends the Son and the Spirit. The Church does not have a mission in the fullest sense of the word; mission is not something the Church carries out or proposes to do, nor is it something the Church pursues as an intention and that shapes its actions. Mission — a word we ought to reserve for the action of God-who-sends — is the action of another who-sends, of a God turned towards the humanity whom he so loves. Indeed, at the source of mission we find the love of God and his desire for the world’s happiness. At the source of missionary outreach, we find love for others: God’s goodwill for humanity over whom he stoops so as to bind up its wounds. ”

“ [I]t is a matter, for the Church, of going out from its own world (its programs, its organization, its rules, its language), from its self-referential system, and to live less centered on itself in order to find its true center in what God does, and in the humanity to whom it is sent. ”¹⁵

- The term “mission” refers first and foremost to the mission of Christ, who accomplishes the work of his Father through his Spirit.
- In this spirit, listening to the word of God is at the source of missionary conversion which acknowledges the ongoing commitment of accepting and being in touch with reality. This is where God reveals Himself, making it possible to recognize the “signs of the times.”¹⁶
- Being a *missionary* is therefore to let oneself be guided by the Holy Spirit who urges us to proclaim the wonders of God in the different languages of the people as evidenced by the narrative of Pentecost. (Acts 2)
- In short, we can say that living a missionary conversion, both personally and in the Church, is....
 - ... to let oneself be grasped by the risen Christ, who transforms our lives;
 - ... to turn the focus away from ourselves, individually and as a group as well as to become receptive to the Holy Spirit acting within me and each person throughout the world;
 - ... to bear witness through our actions and words (in the various languages of the people we are addressing) to the wonders of God in our lives and in the world today; and
 - ... to let ourselves be constantly evangelized, converted, transformed, renewed by the Gospel and by its creative force that beckons us to a missionary outreach going forth.



Discussion

- What's your response to these facts about missionary conversion?
- What are your findings or insights regarding these words?
- What key words do you want to remember for the rest of your reflection on missionary conversion?

At later stages of your reflection process, do not hesitate to review your answers to these questions.

¹⁴ CONSEIL COMMUNAUTÉS ET MINISTÈRES of the Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops, *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁶ “To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics.” (Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, 1965, n° 41)



4. Calls for missionary outreach in the Word of God

The Bible, both the Old and the New Testament, is full of stories of conversions, transformations as well as personal and collective changes. The missionary conversion to which we are called is in keeping with this same process:

“The Word of God is a persistent reminder of how God prompts believers to “go forth.”¹⁷”



Read and reflect upon the following excerpts from the Bible¹⁸, either individually or as a group, while paying attention to any common threads between them. An opportunity for discussion will follow.

- “Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.” (Gen 12:1-4).*
- “‘So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.’ But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ He said, ‘I will be with you [...]’” (Ex 3:10-12)*
- “[Jesus] answered, ‘Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.’” (Mk 1:38)*
- “When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’ Simon answered, ‘Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.’ When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!’ For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.’ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.” (Lk 5:4-11)*
- “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” (Mt 28:18-20)*



Discussion

- Having read these Bible verses, do others come to mind?
- Can you find any similarities between these different excerpts?
- What challenges do you perceive?
- What changes with regard to your initial questions and/or concerns have you noticed while working on this module?

¹⁷ POPE FRANCIS, *Op. cit.*, n° 20.

¹⁸ New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) [www.biblestudytools.com/nrsv/].



5. Assessment of the progress made in this module



Personal reflection followed by discussion

- What have we learnt from the work done in this module?
- What would be the next step?



Depending on your needs and objectives, you can choose the next module to explore¹⁹.

Resources for going further

To delve deeper into the following topics, here are some resources to suit to your needs:

The meaning of mission and missionary conversion

CONSEIL COMMUNAUTÉS ET MINISTÈRES, Assemblée des évêques catholiques du Québec, (Council on Communities and Ministries, Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops) The Missionary Shift of Christian Communities, becoming a “Church of outreach” after *The Joy of the Gospel*, January 2016, p. 8-12:

[www.evequescatholiques.quebec/sn_uploads/fck/TheMissionaryShfit-February2016.pdf].



Videos from the « *Au cœur de la foi : la mission! Prendre le tournant missionnaire en formation à la vie chrétienne* » series (in french only): [www.officedecatechese.qc.ca/videos/colloque/index.html].

(in french only)

The socio-religious context of Quebec in relation to Christian life formation

Opening conference by Suzanne DESROCHERS, « *Entrer dans le mouvement de Pâques... pour plonger dans le décor!* », taken from Suzanne DESROCHERS et Yves GUÉRETTE (dir.), *Au cœur de la foi, la mission! Actes du colloque Prendre le tournant missionnaire en formation à la vie chrétienne*, Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2018, p. 9-13. We can purchase this document on the OCQ website:

[www.officedecatechese.qc.ca/formation/mission/actes.html].



Video summary of this conference:

[www.vimeo.com/233500259].



Testimonies on mission, what it means to be “missionary”

[www.officedecatechese.qc.ca/videos/mission/index.html].

¹⁹ See the [OUR LEARNING ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE](#) section in the introduction.



*Be daring,
get involved!*

FACILITATION TOOLS
for a Missionary Conversion
of Christian Life Formation

What are we bridging?





What are we bridging?

B

MODULE

OBJECTIVES

- Become empowered to better express ourselves, embrace who we are, and receive others.
- Achieve greater understanding in the face of change.
- Welcome change as a process of transition or conversion which calls us to delve deeper into our identity and potential as disciples of Christ.



If it has not already been done, we have much to gain by reading the [Introduction](#) to the handbook which answers, among other questions, "How to use it?".



LEAD-IN



To be read, alone or as a group, to determine if you wish to follow the proposed process of reflection and discussion for this module.

It is not insignificant that we have a pervasive feeling to some degree of a wind of change that is shaking up our pastoral practices. Several of us are beginning to feel that we are lagging behind or experiencing some kind of uneasiness with practices or ways of doing things that, not so long ago, seemed to work well. This feeling can be triggered when our catechetical groups, teams of catechists, or resources diminish. Being confronted with new needs or situations can also push us into a corner and undermine our self-confidence. Nonetheless, this feeling of change can sometimes come from within, such as a call, an aspiration or a desire... From a collective standpoint, our Church has entered a process of missionary transformation. If this "wind of change" is not really new, we can say that it has been blowing since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s¹! It has gained new momentum in recent years, especially since Pope Francis published his apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel* in 2013. Several of us have read and worked on this text, felt challenged by it and saw it as an appeal "to advancing on the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion, which cannot leave things as they are."²

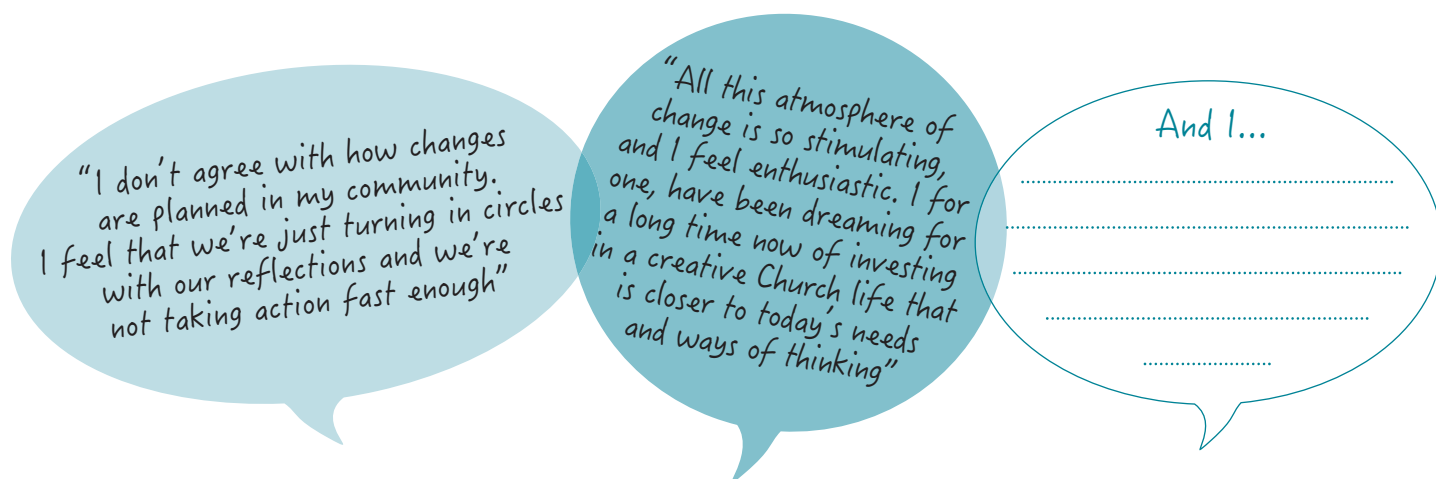
This atmosphere of change can give rise to all kinds of emotions, reactions or concerns:

"All this worries me:
I can see that we can't keep
going the way we used to, but it is
throwing me off balance. I feel like
we don't know where we're going
anymore. I'm losing it."

"I think we are
getting carried away with
ideas of changes to be carried out
and new projects to be developed.
I wonder if it's really necessary,
if we're not going to lose
what's essential in all this...
There are still traditions
that have endured through the ages
and it is necessary to preserve
them, even if it's not
always easy!"

¹ On this subject, we can read the first part of Suzanne DESROCHERS' opening lecture, « Entrer dans le mouvement de Pâques... pour plonger dans le décor! » taken from Suzanne DESROCHERS et Yves GUÉRETTE (dir.), *Au cœur de la foi, la mission!* Actes du colloque Prendre le tournant missionnaire en formation à la vie chrétienne, Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2018, p. 9-13. This document can be purchased on the OCQ website: www.officedecatechese.qc.ca/formation/mission/actes.html.

² POPE FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, n° 25.



- What about you? What's your reaction to these comments?
- With which issue(s) or concern(s) do you most identify with?

If you feel the need to take stock, for yourself and with others, of what this atmosphere of change is causing you to experience, this module can provide you with an explanation. Experience shows us that, if we want this stage of change or conversion to be productive, it is important to take the time to express and embrace oneself in order to seek self-knowledge. Otherwise, tensions, uneasiness and quitting hinder our best energies of collaboration in our projects and pastoral activities.

Therefore, the approach proposed in this module will be based on personal reflection and group discussion, which involves different levels of being (cognitive, emotional, expressive, symbolic and spiritual). It aims to foster a process of transition, both personal and in solidarity with others, in baptismal spirituality, including a Gospel-inspired ritual.

APPROACH TO REFLEXION AND INTERACTIONS



OUTLINE OF THE APPROACH

1. Getting started: the four tasks that foster a process of change.
2. FEELING: two exercises to identify feelings and emotions followed by a group discussion.
3. ADJUSTING: an individual exercise, followed by a discussion.
4. Time to listen to the Word: a biblical meditation session is suggested accompanied by a video presentation (multimedia equipment required).
5. Review the ground covered in this module and leap to the next stage: REINVESTING YOURSELF.



Approximate duration of this process • 2 to 3 hours



1. Getting started



To be read, alone or as a group, for an overview of the proposed approach.

When we are called to change and conversion, just as we are now called to undertake in the Church, we must be open to a process of stages. These lead us to new ways of doing things that are better suited to our needs and present-day reality. It is only natural and indeed desirable when you are committed as a volunteer or as a facilitator of Christian life formation to dedicate yourself to what you are doing and to the people with whom you are collaborating. When changes begin to occur, we can sometimes resist and react to them; we can feel a sense of loss and experience a kind of “mourning.”

Yet, it is through this very process of mourning that we can strike a new balance. It is in faith that we experience a “passage” to the renewed joy of being involved in the Church and in the world, in the following of Jesus Christ. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor 5:17). Change is thus interpreted as a process of resurrection animated by the Spirit, since God makes “all things new” (Rev 21:5).



The four individual and group-based tasks inspired by the work of J. William Worden³ that promote a process of change and conversion are as follows:

1. **Ascertain** • to accept the reality of loss and change
2. **Feel** • process the emotions and feelings brought on by change
3. **Adapt** • adjust to a new environment (it is no longer the same world, the same ways of doing things, etc.)
4. **Reinvest in yourself** • channel your emotional energy into renewal (new relationships, new ways of functioning, new skills development, etc.).

The process suggested here is modelled on these four tasks with a particular emphasis on FEELING with regard to its psychological and spiritual dimensions on a personal as well as an interpersonal level (in a group setting). The [Module A: Where do we stand?](#) further expands the task of ASCERTAINING. The other two tasks, ADJUSTING and REINVESTING IN YOURSELF, are discussed here, but are further developed in [Module C: What is our destination?](#)



For each step of this process, the suggested readings can be gone over either individually or as a group. Instructions for personal reflection or group discussion will be given as your reading progresses.

³ J. William WORDEN, *Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner*, New-York, Springer Publishing Co., 1982, 146 p.



2. Feel



Taking the time to identify and name the feelings that arise from the changes underway essentially allows us to identify the needs and values that are important to us in a given situation. For example:

- **Fear** is often the expression of a need to be reassured or made to feel safe.
- **Anger** informs us that an important need or value is not being considered in a given situation.
- **Sadness** is often an indicator of current or expected loss and grief.
- **Joy** is usually an indication that a need has been satisfied or that an important value for oneself has been actualized.

To engage in a process of change, transformation or conversion, the first challenge is to embrace yourself in the absence of self-judgment and self-censorship. In faith, it is a matter of letting the merciful gaze of God fall upon us, which reveals the truth itself in Charity. This experience can only lead to the joy of the Gospel which becomes contagious: "And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ."⁴

This quotation from *The Joy of the Gospel* prompts us to examine where we stand. What kind of minister of the Gospel am I today? Do I feel discouraged, impatient, anxious, frustrated or enthusiastic about what is ahead and the creativity that it requires?



Two individual exercises are suggested to help you explore the task of FEELING: the scale of emotions / feelings and the personal statements revealing different personality types: individual exercise. Following these exercises, a discussion period is suggested.

2.1. The scale of emotions / feelings: 1st exercise

Take a few moments to identify your predominant emotion⁵ with regard to the current change.



In the following scale representing emotions / feelings, circle the one(s) that are representative of the predominant feelings you are experiencing.



⁴ POPE FRANCIS, *Op. cit.*, n° 80.

⁵ Usually, a situation gives rise to a predominant feeling, but it often happens that we feel more than just one feeling in a situation. For example, a catechist might say that the current changes are causing her concern (because of her uncertainty about her ability to lead a group of young adults). She could add that she also feels enthusiastic about her parish wanting to provide activities for young families.



2.2. Personal statements revealing different personality types: 2nd exercise

Depending on our personality, we have different ways of reacting to change. Here are some examples.



Read carefully and identify the one(s) most in tune with what I feel.

"I can't wait for the project to get started. It seems to me that there are lots of people waiting exactly for us to shift and for the Church to change. We've been talking about it for the longest time; we should start doing things. It's going to be fun!" Claude

"We talk and have discussions about it, but what frustrates me is that we are not planning anything concrete. I feel like I'm wasting my time. When will we specify what needs to change? How? Who does what? And take action." Maxime

"It feels like this change is putting us at odds with each other. It depresses me. It undermines the morale of the troops. Since we started talking about change, we have had trouble getting along; we have experienced conflicts. I, for one, am dreaming of a united Church." Alex

"I don't really see where we're going with all this. The directions are not clear. I wonder if we're not in the process of throwing everything we've built until now away; and all for nothing... Catechesis has been working for years; we've gotten used to it. Why change what is already working? I'm afraid we're going to throw the baby out with the bath water and lose sight of what we're here for." Dominique

2.3. Group discussion (4 to 5 people)



A group discussion based on what everyone has just identified in the two previous exercises:

- What am I experiencing or feeling in this atmosphere of change?



By expressing what we feel to others, we are called to accept our differences and to adjust to each other. By equipping ourselves with mechanisms for dialogue and communication that allow us to take into account different points of view, we will be able to better understand ourselves as individuals and as a team so as to work better together.

For the purpose of group discussions in this module, you can use the simple "talking stick" technique. Everybody read the following information and adopt the guidelines for the facilitation process.



The talking stick technique encourages talking about what we are experiencing as well as mutual listening in small groups of 4 or 5 people.

The talking stick is a communication tool used by many Indigenous peoples that allows for fair and balanced discussion. The stick can be replaced by another symbolic object.

The person holding it can speak without interruption. When he/she has finished, he/she passes it on to the person who requests it. It is a symbol of harmony and sharing within the community. It allows for each person to speak with the assurance that he/she will be heard and without being judged and opposed.



A few rules

To promote good communication and an atmosphere of trust in the group, here are some rules to be respected by each member of the group during the sharing process:

1. *Begin your sentences with "I".* Each person expresses what he/she is thinking, feeling or living personally and in the most earnest way possible without compromising his/her private life. It is not necessary to reveal everything; it is simply important to speak in truth (tell the truth).
2. *Receive others in kindness and listen without passing judgment:* each member of the group really aims to understand and respect the real-life experience of the person who is speaking. There are no comments or reactions.
3. *What is said in the group remains in the group:* a confidentiality agreement is essential among members who pledge to never disclose to anyone (and in any manner) whatsoever what has been shared in the group.

3. Settle in



After having accepted that reality is no longer as it once was and acknowledged our feelings, the work of adjustment and adaptation begins. We slowly get used to living in a changing context. We accept that there are "losses." We let go of the expectations which we once had. We are beginning to define what is important to us and what we need to experience.

3.1. Personal statements revealing different personality types: individual exercise

Depending on our personality, we have different ways of coping with change. Here are some examples.



Read carefully and identify the one(s) most in tune with what I feel.

"What I find hardest is to accept that we have to wait, plan and take into account the diocesan committee before taking action. I have to believe that it will have impacts on people... It's a good thing there are people out there planning. It's true that we may have fewer problems. I'm fast-paced, but sometimes it puts us in a little trouble. We're not in line yet, and it's not easy to see how it's going to take place in practical terms. As long as we can have fun and start changing things, I'm up for it." Maxence

"I understand that not everyone has the same outlook as I do for the future of the parish. I am trying to understand what it is like for them, even if I find that they are making a meal of the changes in progress... I wish it was better planned and organized. It's true that there are always unforeseen events. I want to try to trust others. I won't be alone in the new project." Yannick

"I don't feel well with the disagreements and our inability to share the same outlook. It is not easy to accept that the "love one another" is not so easily lived in our parishes. I have to accept that it won't be perfect as an understanding between us. I hope we can respect and communicate with each other, even if we disagree. Someone told me I had some good ideas. I will try to say more about my point of view at the next meeting." Lou

"I make efforts to take it upon myself and accept to be patient only to listen to the ideas and feelings of others. It won't go as fast as it used to. We had a good team and things were moving; we were organized. I accept that we take the next meeting so that everyone can say what they feel. After this, we'll be able to share the work in taking one more step. But I have to be careful because not everyone is moving at my speed." Camille



3.2. Sharing with the talking stick



A group discussion is suggested based on what everyone has just discovered:

- *How am I handling this adjustment or adaptation phase?*



To go further in this task, we can explore [Module C: Where are we going?](#)

4. Time to listen to the Word

The journey we have made in this module as well as the sharing of our feelings and emotions may give us the impression that we are being tossed around on the waves of change. For some, the crossing may seem more perilous than for others. To embrace change as a path, we are invited to listen to the word of God as we are.

4.1. Meditation based on the calming of the storm narrative

A meditative approach is suggested based on the calming of the storm narrative (*Lk 8:22-25*).



Click on the link to the proposed animated video I (in french only): [www.youtube.com/watch?v=19RIm9RX8VQ]

4.2. Spontaneous prayers

Introduction: *In faith and hope, let us entrust to the Lord our desires and plans.*

Answer after each intention: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

4.3. Gesture

Introduction: *The Lord is present in the vessel of his Church on a journey. He is the God of all passages. In the midst of the tempest, the Risen One is always there to bring us his Peace. In trust in Him who calms our storms and strengthens our bonds of communion, let us share the Peace of Christ with one another.*

The sign of peace.

5. Review of the journey covered in this module and a leap to the next step

5.1. Personal reflection

- *What did this module make me experience?*
- *How do my faith and commitment as a baptized person call me and sustain me in the fulfillment of my commitment?*

5.2. Sharing with the talking stick

A free expression session based on your personal reflection.

5.3. Springboard to the next step

If the grieving process is well underway⁶, this module may lead you to accept to REINVEST in yourself differently. The crossing that leads us to the other shore invites us to explore in greater serenity the new horizon that is opening up before us.

⁶ Refer to the four individual and group-based tasks that promote a process of change and conversion, presented in the [introduction to this module on page 3](#).



Reinvest Yourself

At the end of any process of change and transition in our lives, we are led to “choosing life again” and reinvesting ourselves in a new way. This is an opportunity to recapture our deep motivations, values and desires regarding our commitment to the Church. It is also the opportunity to consider our needs, strengths and limitations at this stage of our lives. It is a time to assert yourself and move forward.

The context of change raises key questions:

- *What value(s) or ambitions are most important to me in this context of change?*
- *What motivates me to continue despite the challenges and difficulties we face?*
- *How do my faith and my being baptized call me and sustain me in the fulfillment of my commitment?*



Each of us can take a few moments of personal reflection on the preceding questions. A group discussion can conclude this exercise with the following question:

- *What **landmarks** will guide us in exploring this new shoreline where the Lord is sending us to pursue his mission?*



To further this process, we can work on [Module C: What is our destination?](#)

Resources for going further

To better understand ourselves in terms of our reactions to changes...

Take a short online personality test. It is inspired by the personality types developed by Carl Gustav Jung and found in a more elaborate inventory, the *Myers-Briggs Type Inventory*. Simply click on the link below to access the questionnaire.



[www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp] (in french only)



To understand that changes occur in different stages, here are some personal stories and tools that can help you (only available in French): [www.oserchanger.com/blogue_2/2015/09/28/adaptation-au-changement/]

*Be daring,
get involved!*

FACILITATION TOOLS
for a Missionary Conversion
of Christian Life Formation

C

MODULE

What Is Our Destination?



TRIPARTITE REFLECTION GROUP
ON THE FUTURE PATHS OF
CHRISTIAN LIFE FORMATION

What's Our Destination?

C
MODULE

OBJECTIVES

- Let yourself be challenged by testimonies and points of reference that can enlighten a missionary conversion of Christian life formation.
- Develop a missionary vision of Christian life formation on both a personal level and as part of a team.
- Identify the transformations to be carried out in our community on Christian life formation based on this vision.



If it has not already been done, we have much to gain by reading the [Introduction](#) to the handbook which answers, among other questions, "How to use it?".



LEAD-IN



To be read, alone or as a group, to determine if you wish to follow the proposed process of reflection and discussion for this module.

This module is intended for individuals and groups who feel ready to embark on the path of missionary conversion of Christian life formation, but who are wondering about the direction to be taken or the changes to be considered.

"I feel ready
to experience change.
For me, it is clear that we a turning point;
we have to go elsewhere. I feel ready
to give up habits, to move forward.
But I need to clarify with my team where
we want to go, what a more missionary
Christian life formation could look like
in our community."

"Our team, thought that
if we want to experience a
missionary conversion in our community,
we mustn't act alone. We need to get
as many people as possible involved. This
means listening to the people we are reaching
out to as well as taking an interest in their points
of view and ideas. It also means sharing a common
vision that goes beyond that of our team of leaders
as it must include the families and people we want
to reach. We no longer want to suggest activities
and projects without everybody considering
the question: 'Where do we want to go?
What is inside all of us and what do
we want to experience
together?'".

Since the beginning,
I've wanted to get things moving.
I finally convinced my team
to bring changes to our organization.
We even started a new project!
But after some time had passed, we realized
that we hadn't taken the time to clarify
our vision together. In the beginning, we had
the impression that things were progressing.
The difficulties we are encountering now are
making us doubt ourselves. Did we start off
in the right direction? Do we really
know what change we want
to bring about?



- *What's your reaction to these comments?*
- *Which do you most identify with?*

The suggested approach in this module will allow you to define a missionary vision of Christian life formation by letting yourself be inspired by reference points inherited from the Second Vatican Council¹. They are however always identified, expressed, and embodied in new ways in particular circumstances.

This is why they will be prefaced by the presentation of some accounts describing experiences lived in the field which show different facets of an ongoing missionary conversion. These stories will not be offered as models, instructions or paths already marked out to follow, but rather as testimonies or illustrations of different transformation processes in practices that stem from a missionary vision of Christian life formation.

Five guiding principles will be suggested later on to be used in your revision of the testimonies that follow. The purpose of this exercise is to identify what guided the initial questioning or transformations that were undertaken. In rereading these testimonials, you will be able to identify how these guiding principles can be embodied in a practical manner and diversified so as to clarify your outlook regarding your own practices.



Note

The suggested approach in this module, especially the presentation of the guiding principles, refers to theological content which, even if delivered in a simplified way, may require further study. The presence of a person trained in theology would be an asset in supporting the facilitation of this module by providing guidance or insight, if necessary. Additional resources are also provided to further explore each guiding principle.

PROCESS OF REFLECTION AND COMMUNICATION



PROCESS OUTLINE

1. Getting started.
2. Various paths of missionary conversion of Christian life formation: some personal accounts followed by an assessment of the insights they provide.
3. Reference points for a missionary vision of Christian life formation: a presentation followed by a review of the testimonies in the light of these milestones.
4. Formulating a missionary vision of Christian life formation inspired by these reference points.
5. Start thinking on how to act locally.



Approximate duration of this process • 3.5 hours to an entire day

Depending on circumstances and needs, the approach proposed in this module can be completed in a single day, or in a few half-day or evening workshops.

¹ The Second Vatican Council is a major event of the Catholic Church that took place from 1962 to 1965 bringing together bishops and theologians to officially mark the Church's embrace of the modern world. Its vision is still relevant today because it has committed the Church to a process of profound transformation that has not yet yielded its full potential. On this subject, we can read the first part of Suzanne Desrochers' opening address, « Entrer dans le mouvement de Pâques... pour plonger dans le décor! », in Suzanne DESROCHERS et Yves GUÉRETTE (dir.), *Au cœur de la foi, la mission!* Proceedings of the conference *Prendre le tournant missionnaire en formation à la vie chrétienne*, Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2018, p. 9 -13. We can purchase a copy of this document on the OCQ website: [www.officedecatechese.qc.ca/formation/mission/actes.html].



1. Getting started



Group reading activity followed by a sharing session and prayer.

A missionary conversion is not simply about changing things or inventing something new. It encourages us to return to the sources to experience or restore our relationship with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit whose love deeply moves and transforms us. It leads to letting oneself be animated by the Spirit of Pentecost who urges the disciples to speak of God's wonders in the various languages of those who hear them. It implies listening to the Lord who sends the disciples to pursue his mission: "And He said unto them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.'" (Mk 16:15).

At Pentecost, the Spirit descends upon the Apostles and makes them go forth from themselves transforming them into heralds of God's wondrous deeds, capable of speaking to each person in his or her own language. The Holy Spirit also infuses them with strength to announce the newness of the Gospel with boldness... Let us invoke him today by relying on prayer, without which all action runs the risk of being in vain and the message ultimately of little essence. Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the Good News not only in words, but above all through their lives being transfigured by God's presence.²



After a pause for personal reflection, we will have a sharing session where everyone is free to express themselves.³

- In what way(s) or how does God's presence transform my life?
- How does this experience of faith inspire my commitment?

We can end this sharing session with a hymn to the Holy Spirit:

« D'une même voix », CCCB/Novalis, 2002, n° 688 or Taizé's *Veni Sancte Spiritus*.

2. Different paths for the missionary conversion of Christian life formation:

The five personal experience narratives below are not suggested as models to follow, but rather as testimonies from the field illustrating different paths of transformation undertaken in a missionary spirit.



The important thing is to let yourself be imbued with the spirit that supports this experience / these experiences. Each testimony is followed by a set of questions to gauge your understanding, prompt reflection, and engage group discussion so as to enable you to assess your discoveries and questions.

a) An experience with supporting young adults who want to get baptized • Luce's testimony

"When I started to assist young adults in the parish, we had a theme-based catechesis process where theological and liturgical contents were sequenced in a specific order. So, when a young man had missed a meeting, we had to repeat the same content. The teaching-style approach discouraged the young people as they would actually fall asleep. As a consequence of this state of affairs, I was growing convinced that simply teaching religious material was not advancing the faith."

² POPE FRANCIS, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel) on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World*, n° 259.

³ We can use the technique of the talking stick presented in [Module B: What are we bridging?, p. 5](#).



My experience as an urban missionary⁴ had gotten me used to adapting to people by remaining close to their concerns. So, I felt the need to be more in tune with the real-life experiences of these young people who were coming to me to become godparents or to receive Baptism. I noticed how quickly the youth were changing and how little the pre-set paths were adjusted to their reality. So, I asked my priest for permission to redesign the approach by adapting myself to people just as they came and by relying on truth and freedom as points of reference.

I implemented an approach based on pastoral dialogue, which invites us to proceed mainly from the Word of God (often the Gospel of the following Sunday) and from the very questions of the young people.

I, therefore, suggest that we meet for one hour a week. This group is open to everyone and can welcome a new person at any time of the year. The first interaction is initially in a one-to-one meeting where I invite the young person to tell me his or her personal history with God as well as to start a journal that will allow him or her to be mindful of his or her questions and discoveries. This will allow the catechumens to revisit their path of faith when, for instance, the time comes to write their letter to the bishop in order to receive Confirmation. They can participate in the weekly meetings at their own pace and according to their own needs, at least eight times, before going through a final discernment process in view of receive a sacrament. During this last meeting, several proposals are made to them in order to continue their journey in the Church, including the option of continuing to participate in this catechetical group. "



Identify in the testimony above

- the transitions or transformations: we have gone from... (what has been questioned or abandoned) to... (a new way of seeing or doing);
- the values or points of reference that seem to have guided these transformations.

b) An experience with a more mystagogical baptismal pastoral care • Céline's testimony

" Prior to the 2018-2019 pastoral year, pre-baptismal pastoral care often resembled an intensive catechesis where the aim was to explain to parents the meaning of everything they would experience before their child's baptism. In a first catechetical meeting, the parents, godfather and godmother were given the opportunity to express themselves on "Who is Jesus?" to them. A second meeting was held to explain the meaning of baptism and the gestures made during the celebration.

I felt a lot of dissatisfaction with this way of doing things because I had the impression that I was "filling" the parents with notions. Over the years, we had noticed that families came with a certain interest to the baptismal meetings, but I felt that our approach was ill-suited.

They came with a thirst, but our approach did not quench it in the least despite the presence of the Word of God. In fact, we were mostly trying to provide knowledge in the hope of filling a gap. So, in a bold attempt, we shifted our procedure by focusing on the experience, itself, of baptism in the hope that the actual rite would enlighten their faith and strike a resonant chord in their lives.

⁴ Mission urbaine is a work of the Diocese of Quebec aimed at reaching young adults where they are: [www.ecdq.org/mission-urbaine/].



We explored a more mystagogical way of doing catechesis by inviting them to enter into the liturgical experience of Baptism before reinterpreting spiritual and human experience in the light of the Gospel. In practical terms, we moved the topic of the first meeting: 'Who is Jesus?' so it could be explored in a session following Baptism. Essentially, the catechesis remained the same, but time and space, with respect to their lives, were different. We tried this experiment in the uncertainty that the parents would not take the invitation to return to meet with us after the baptism seriously.

We were amazed to see that they were present at the meeting with a keen interest in going over their experience. In a spirit of amazement, the sharing took place with enthusiasm and openness toward the discoveries they were making. This changes the atmosphere of baptismal meetings enormously. This new approach seems to open them up to the unexpected light and joy of the Gospel. "



Identify in the testimony above

- the transitions or transformations: we have gone from... (what has been questioned or abandoned) to... (a new way of seeing or doing);
- the values or points of reference that seem to have guided these transformations.

c) An experience of sharing the Word through dialogue • Thomas' testimony

" In our diocese, three newly constituted parishes among a total of 29 older traditional parishes were involved in a new common stake through a unique pastoral team. The fundamental challenge was to learn to embrace the mission in all its aspects in new ways.

One of these new ways involved taking one to two hours a week where the pastoral team actually scrutinized, studied and prayed the Word before holding its next meeting. Within a short time, this resulted in the onset of greater team consolidation as well as more problems being resolved faster than before.

The same procedure was recommended to a group of catechists belonging to this unit. During the weekly meetings set up to prepare upcoming catechetical sessions, half of the duration was devoted to reading and sharing the Word. The result was, once again, to bring the catechists closer together (some parents were appreciative). This may seem an improbable adventure, but nothing is impossible for the leader of this endeavor if he is actually given the chance to lead the boat.

If the Word is truly prevalent in our utterances, this "supremacy" must be embodied in the time management of our meetings. This is what we are trying to accomplish, and the rewards are already evident. "



Identify in the testimony above

- the transitions or transformations: we have gone from... (what has been questioned or abandoned) to... (a new way of seeing or doing);
- the values or points of reference that seem to have guided these transformations.



d) An experience with the recruitment and training of young leaders • Robin et Caroline's testimony

"The pastoral team of our unit has three main directions: family, social pastoral care and community life. For us, these three outlooks are directly linked to Pope Francis' desire to turn our communities into an outgoing Church.

For over 20 years, the pastoral team has been trying to involve young people in a variety of ways. After Confirmation, Paladin⁵ training is even offered to the youth to develop leadership and facilitation skills. This has led to the growing involvement of young people in the parish. Committed to this path, several of them matured to the point where they are willing and able to take on new challenges. It was at this moment that the idea to create the Comité Jeunesse Justice Sociale (CJJS) was born, and to open it to other young people, believers or not, in order to raise awareness among people of all ages about social justice, the fight against poverty and the protection of the environment.

The pastoral team dared to give these young people a REAL mandate, and they have risen to the challenge. They have been operating at their own pace for the past few months. A dozen of them meet regularly to prepare activities such as the Solidarity Vigil and Earth Day. They are committed to various social action projects which also stand as open invitations to all parishioners and families, young and older alike, on their catechetical journey. Through the involvement of these inspired and inspiring young people, the Church takes on a more missionary aspect while at the same time it provides a starting point for new generations."



Identify in the testimony above

- *the transitions or transformations: we have gone from... (what has been questioned or abandoned) to... (a new way of seeing or doing);*
- *the values or points of reference that seem to have guided these transformations.*

e) An experience with a solidarity group (La Gang GPS⁶, Drummondville) • Guy's testimony

"For the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor 5:14) — Awareness-raising and the context of a transformation

"It had become unbearable for us to announce the "Good News" by creating dissatisfaction to the point that everyone - young people, parents and... catechists! - were only looking to complete their journey. The love of Christ that urges us with irresistible power and the love for young people have led us to simply want to walk and grow with them desiring to the experience God's love. We were able to depart from a minimalist approach which aimed at preparing for the Sacraments thanks to the arrival of a new catechist, well acquainted with the world of adolescents, for the Rite of Christian Initiation of 7- to 14- year-olds. As a team, we looked at the similarities between Christian life formation for younger children and what is experienced in teen groups: a climate of friendship, proximity and freedom; confidence to express oneself; the experience of a "gang" that discovers, acts, prays and celebrates through various types of activities. The concrete support of the diocesan services and Pope Francis' appeal not to 'leave things as they are'⁷ have helped us to head out towards the 'open sea' by daring to create something new for families with their help."

⁵ *Opération Paladin* is offered in the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil as a training path in facilitation and leadership techniques supported by a spiritual path for young people aged 15 to 25 who have received their Confirmation.

⁶ « Gang de pèlerins solidaires » [Gang of Pilgrims in Solidarity]

⁷ POPE FRANCIS, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel) on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World*, n° 25.



The points of reference for the baptismal catechumenate — Convictions and guidelines for a new way of doing things

“ Personalized support during transition intervals. Drawing upon the Baptismal Catechumenate, young people are met individually with their parents: before registration through a welcoming process; and each time there is a change their spiritual journey, a transition interval between the stages of their progression takes place. This allows the young individuals to reinterpret their experience of the year so as to choose whether or not to continue their formation. The transition intervals allow the advisers to be attentive to the needs, difficulties, questions, experiences of faith, spiritual growth, etc. of the young people and their parents. These meetings inspire trust and a communion of hearts which sets the tone for the rest of process.

Inculturation, diversity of activities and adapted schedule. For our missionary action to be conducted in the cultural and physical proximity of local families, we engage in diverse interactive activities based on the Word of God. Everyone can speak out on the Word, create, move, pray together and develop their inner self through various approaches, including Christian meditation. Depending on the activities, young people are not necessarily separated into age groups, which creates the impression that they are at home. The model is structured around 3 types of activities: catechesis of the journey, sacramental experiences, and sacramental paths. The latter two are ad hoc activities divided into 4 categories: social commitment, fraternity, prayer, and celebration. To accommodate the schedules of young families, we offer a choice of activities on pedagogical days, weekday evenings and Sunday mornings. A GPS website offers families real-time information, support, and the opportunity to choose and modify their activity choices. For organizers, this website simplifies communication with families and registration management for each meeting. This “sign-up” approach to learning is a message of freedom and accountability aimed at the young who, with their parents, are invited to register on the website. They can choose their GPS activities and, if they so desire, get further involved after their introduction to the activities of the parcours M (Mission jeunesse). ”

“Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Cor 5:17) — Signs of fruitfulness

“ The GPS Gang is but a fledgling in the nest that is trying to re-establish the Rite of Christian Initiation as part of a broader process of Christian growth and Christian life. Among the visible fruits is joy: joy in believing and discovering Christ in the Bible given to young people, which some read at home in the evening; joy in learning to pray; joy in seeing that we can transform the world together by acting with Jesus and as He does; joy in celebrating with the community; joy of coming to diversified and engaging activities; joy of learning by letting oneself be catechized by one another; joy of welcoming future baptized school-aged youth who are progressing on their journey with the Gang. This Christian formation, inspired by the pastoral ministry of generation and the baptismal catechumenate, appears to be bringing renewed inspiration to the young and not so young to live with Christ, through Him and in Him. We are wagering that it can be a real driving force in moving our communities forward into the missionary shift. ”



Identify in the testimony above

- the transitions or transformations: we have gone from... (what has been questioned or abandoned) to... (a new way of seeing or doing);
- the values or points of reference that seem to have guided these transformations.

Assessment of discoveries based on testimonies



Reflection and group discussion

- Having read the testimonies, what's your reaction to them (discoveries, hesitations or questions)?
- Which one(s) do you agree with the most? Why?
- In your own words, what is the missionary vision that emerges from this story or these stories?
- What does this work inspire in you?



3. Reference points for a missionary vision of Christian life formation



Read the introduction, either individually or as a team, to get an overview of this section, followed by a presentation of each of the points of references.

A missionary vision of Christian life formation unfolds through distinctive activities, adapted to the specific persons and circumstances of a community. The testimonies that have been presented to you show that there are a thousand and one ways of living a missionary conversion. There are multiple catalysts for change, and they are dependent on various factors. This is clearly evident in the missionary approach to Christian life formation as well as in other areas.

Nonetheless, if the process is multifaceted and there are multiple results, how can we know if a practice or project is missionary? After all, it is not simply a matter of bringing novelty or change. If new projects or changes are not driven by a missionary vision, they can unknowingly replicate the same habits or vision that we sincerely believed to have abandoned.



Reference points from a living tradition

A missionary vision and missionary practices are recognizable through some specific features, inspired by the drive of the first Christian communities which were called to action by the Spirit of Pentecost. Over the centuries, this mobilization has taken various forms, but whenever the Church has had to face new missionary challenges, she has sought to connect with this source.

This is our current state of affairs because we have been living for several decades in a situation comparable to the early days of the Church. We are immersed in an increasingly ethnically diverse culture in which everyone builds meaning from the points of reference offered by a range of cultural landscapes, religious or otherwise, among which Christianity occupies a marginal place. However, many of our current pastoral proposals or projects continue, often without us realizing it, to bear traces of a Christian influence that has marked the history of our Church throughout the West. This situation therefore challenges us to relearn the missionary spirit that constitutes the identity of the Church, which is a process of collective learning that takes time.

It is in this way that the Church has undertaken a vast movement of renewal guided by its missionary origins of which the Second Vatican Council⁸ marked a major turning point in the 1960s. Since then, the Council's orientations have not ceased being updated in a constantly evolving context. It is in this living tradition that the proposed reference points are inscribed in order to guide our vision and to enlighten our decisions in this process of missionary conversion that must always be repeated out of fidelity to the One sending us out today to proclaim the Gospel.



⁸ See footnote 1 on p. 2 of this module for a brief description of this event.



To shed light on a missionary vision of Christian life formation, five points of reference are suggested⁹. These are followed by a process of re-reading the testimonies presented in the previous section in order to identify some of the features or characteristics of a missionary Christian life formation.



CHRISTIAN LIFE FORMATION...

- a) ... centred on the essence of faith in Christ.
- b) ... in the service of the "dialogue of salvation" between God and the person.
- c) ... nourished by an initiating community.
- d) ... geared towards serving the kingdom of God.
- e) ... embodied in a culture.

These reference points are inspired by the practice of the first Christian communities to proclaim the Gospel to those who had not yet heard it. They have guided communities and Churches living in what were called "mission lands." They are proposed to us today as guidelines for all our activities and projects concerning Christian life formation, as well as for all pastoral work in our world which is no longer Christian.



The five reference points are discussed in sections below. Read them as a group or have the facilitator leading the group present them in a lively fashion. Following each section, a short discussion is encouraged to facilitate your grasp of the material. If you wish to delve deeper into any of the reference points, resources furthering the discussion are suggested.

a) Christian life formation centred on the essence of faith in Christ

Jesus Christ loves you. He gave his life to save you, and now, he is living beside you every day to enlighten you, to strengthen you, and to liberate you.¹⁰

Christian faith is based on experiencing a loving presence that transcends all human love and opens it to new horizons. It is a Love that uplifts, liberates and heals; a Love that is the strength of an unsuspected life even in the most desperate of situations where evil or death seems to prevail. Many people undergo this experience without knowing its source. It is through contact with the witnesses of the past and present that they can discover in Jesus Christ the path to follow to receive the abundant Life that the Father gives to us all.

So, how can we recognize a Christian life formation that is centred on the essence of faith in Christ?

Here are some features or characteristics:

- Rather than focusing on the transmission of a doctrine or a set of codes of conduct, Christian life formation is above all about guiding and accompanying people from where they stand in their quest or spiritual experiences to being able to recognize Jesus Christ, the One leading them on a path of resurrection: "This loving presence in my night, this life force at the heart my distress, it was Christ already present at my side and I did not know it!"
- Every experience of faith comes first of all as an initiative from God that is beyond our actions or words. This implies that every person or team committed to Christian life formation has a spirituality of attentive listening for the action of the Holy Spirit in himself or herself and in others.

⁹ Listed here are the main sources of inspiration for these points of reference. Other more specific resources are proposed following the presentation of each one. ASSEMBLY OF QUEBEC CATHOLIC BISHOPS. *Jesus Christ, the Way to Humanization: Orientations for the Training and Development of a Christian Life*, Montreal, Médiaspaul, 2004, chapter 4 "Guidelines for catechetical activity", p. 55-79. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY. *General Directory for Catechesis*, 1997, n°s 90-91: "The baptismal catechumenate: inspiration for catechesis in the Church" COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITIES AND MINISTRIES, ASSEMBLY OF QUEBEC CATHOLIC BISHOPS). *The Missionary Shift of Christian Communities becoming a "Church of outreach" after The Joy of the Gospel January 2016*, p. 15-16: "Conversion from 'practices of Christendom' to 'missionary practices': the example of Christian initiation.

¹⁰ POPE FRANCIS, *Op. cit.*, n° 164.



- When our actions and words bear witness to the experience of being “seized by Christ,” they are of great importance. This is why the “essential contents” of Christian life formation are above all drawn from the **testimonies and life of the people and communities** who, for two millennia, have welcomed this Good News and have been transformed by it.
- The **Bible occupies a central place in Christian life formation** as it bridges witnesses of the past to those of the present. When read and interpreted with others in the light of the Mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection, it becomes “the word of God which is fulfilled for us today” (Lk 4:16-21). It is on this experience of a living and active Word that Christian life formation centered on the essence of the Christian faith is founded.



Group work

- *What are our discoveries and/or questions about this point of reference?*
 - *How does this point of reference inspire us in our own process of missionary conversion?*
- * **Tip:** Keep a record of your thoughts in preparation for the synthesis at the end of this module.



RESOURCES TO FURTHER DEVELOP YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THIS POINT OF REFERENCE IF NEEDED

QUEBEC ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS. *Jesus Christ, the Way to Humanization: Orientations for the Training and Development of a Christian Life*, Montreal, Médiaspaul, 2004, p. 12-14: “Jesus Christ, life path”; p. 55-56: “The heart of catechesis”.
 CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY. *General Directory for Catechesis*, 1997, n° 80: “The Object of Catechesis”; n° 94: “The Word of God: source of catechesis”; n°s 98-104: une catéchèse centrée sur le Christ.
 POPE FRANCIS. *The Joy of the Gospel*, n° 164: The kerygma at the centre of catechesis.

b) Christian life formation in the service of the “dialogue of salvation” between God and the person ¹¹

The essence of Christian faith is rooted in a presence or encounter which God initiates as we are preceded by the Lord who gives himself to us as a source of Love. Christian life formation is instrumental to this encounter of which the rules and nature are beyond our control: “Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems.”¹²

What makes Christian life formation conducive to the dialogue between God and people?

Here are some of the features or characteristics:

- To know if you are preceded by the Lord implies **constantly listening in** and being attentive to what people are experiencing, to their spiritual quest and to the traces of God’s presence or activity already acting in their lives.
- This implies **spiritual availability, a capacity for discernment** that avoids setting anything in stone once and for all, to accept to periodically question oneself, to let oneself be disturbed by the unexpected and to trust in the One who is the first “catechist”.
- Inspired by “divine pedagogy,” based on the gratuitousness of love and respect for the freedom of others, Christian life formation promotes a **personalized approach to welcoming, guiding, and learning by listening to people** while respecting the process of transformation of each person whatever their age or state of being.
- Christian life formation encourages **discovery, questioning, and research** based on queries, doubts, sorrows, flaws in our existence and flaws in our reasoning. It accompanies the development of a faith that is a never-ending conversation between God and human beings. A conversation in which God is calling to each of us, the catechists, catechized, the elders and beginners in the faith, to let ourselves be transformed by one another through contact with others in Him so as to become His people.



Group work

- *What are our discoveries and/or questions about this point of reference?*
 - *How does this point of reference inspire us in our own process of missionary conversion?*
- * **Tip:** Keep a record of your thoughts in preparation for the synthesis at the end of this module.

¹¹ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Op. cit.*, n° 143.

¹² POPE FRANCIS, *Op. cit.*, n° 47.



(in french only)

RESOURCES TO FURTHER DEVELOP YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THIS POINT OF REFERENCE IF NEEDED

ASSEMBLÉE DES ÉVÊQUES DU QUÉBEC. *Op. cit.*, p. 56-64 : « Les aspects de la démarche catéchétique ».

CONGRÉGATION POUR LE CLERGÉ. *Op. cit.*, n°s 36-49 : La Révélation; n°s 143-144 : « Pédagogie divine et catéchèse ».

DEMERS, Bruno. « Les “nouvelles” notions de révélation et de foi de *Dei Verbum* et la catéchèse », *Lumen Vitæ*, (2013/1), p. 19-35.

DERROITTE, Henri. « Quels liens entre la liturgie et la “nouvelle évangélisation”? », dans Henri DERROITTE, Jean-Paul LAURENT et Gilles ROUTHIER, *Un christianisme infiniment précieux. Mélanges de théologie pratique offerts au père André Fossion*, Namur/Paris/Montréal, Lumen Vitæ/Novalis, 2015, p. 151-171.

MOOG, François. « Le contenu de la foi et les contenus de la catéchèse », dans F. MOOG et J. MOLINARIO, (dir.), *La catéchèse et le contenu de la foi*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 2011, p. 168-169.

REICHERT, Jean-Claude. « Servir l'expérience de la Révélation, de l'instruction à l'initiation », *Lumen Vitæ*, (2005/2), p. 179-191.

TREMBLAY, Sophie. « Se savoir précédés, voyager léger », dans Suzanne DESROCHERS et Yves GUÉRETTE (dir.), *Au cœur de la foi, la mission! Actes du colloque Prendre le tournant missionnaire en formation à la vie chrétienne*, Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2018, p. 17-24.

c) Christian life formation nourished by an initiating community

The “dialogue of salvation” between God and the person is developed in a never-ending process of conversion by which each person is led to discover himself/herself as the son or daughter of a Father whose Love transforms the whole being, affecting both his or her sense of identity as well as belongingness. In this way, being or becoming a Christian leads to gaining a family whose ties bind it directly to the relationship that unites the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The configuration of these ties is more like a network that is always open and constantly changing than a building to be entered or an enclosure delineated by a fence. In this spirit, the ecclesial community or family is the nurturing environment of Christian life formation in an ongoing concern of initiation, fruitfulness and generation. This is how it can be designated as an “initiating community”.

So, how can we identify Christian life formation nourished by an initiating community?

Here are some of the features or characteristics:

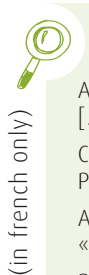
- It is by being close to the ecclesial community in its various forms (biblical sharing groups, intergenerational catechetical groups, movements, charitable associations, Sunday liturgical assemblies, etc.) and by seeing it live that we can learn what Christian life is. In this sense, **the community is the “living content”** of Christian life formation, enabling learning by osmosis of the various dimensions of faith which require “to be known, celebrated, lived, and translated into prayer.”¹³
- Christian life formation is aimed at people of various ages and from various backgrounds. It is **adapted to the needs and pace of each person** while promoting the **development of intergenerational and community ties**.
- Christian life formation nourished by an initiating community does not mean that its purpose is to prepare for and lead to the Rite of Christian Initiation which is not to be considered as the destination or the “final seal” of a successful catechesis. The sacraments, as well as various liturgical rites lived in the community are considered as **significant moments or milestones through which God acts** upon people’s progress and in the life of the community, giving them a fresh impetus in an unfinished conversion process.
- Christian life formation nurtured by an initiating community takes on **various forms**. If it is immediately apparent in Christian initiation courses for young people or adults, it can also contribute to spiritual awakening or the first announcement by **addressing people who have not yet been baptized or whose baptism had been put on hold. In the current missionary context, these people deserve that greater attention be given to them.** Christian life formation also plays an essential role in on-going catechesis, both for the baptized and for the whole community, so that their faith can flourish by being constantly nurtured.
- From this perspective of life-long catechesis, it is important that **Christian life formation be equipped to appoint and train leaders** in the area, capable of challenging, awakening and stimulating the creativity of their community. By providing teacher training, it contributes to the fact that the whole Christian community can become an active participant in Christian life formation.

¹³ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Op. cit.*, n° 84.



Group work

- What are our discoveries and/or questions about this point of reference?
 - How does this point of reference inspire us in our own process of missionary conversion?
- * **Tip:** Keep a record of your thoughts in preparation for the synthesis at the end of this module.



RESOURCES TO FURTHER DEVELOP YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THIS POINT OF REFERENCE IF NEEDED

ASSEMBLÉE DES ÉVÊQUES DU QUÉBEC. *Op. cit.*, p. 65-68 : « Une démarche structurée [...] intégrant la dimension rituelle [...] communautaire ».

CONFÉRENCE DES ÉVÊQUES DE FRANCE. *Texte national pour l'orientation de la catéchèse en France et principes d'organisation*, Paris, Bayard/Fleurus-Mame/Cerf, Collection « Documents d'Église », 2006, en particulier p. 30-60.

A CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, General Directory for Catechesis, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997. n°s 78-79: « La catéchèse, une action ecclésiale »; n° 20: « La communauté chrétienne et la responsabilité de la catéchèse ».

DERROITTE, Henri. « Quels liens entre la liturgie et la "nouvelle évangélisation"? », *Loc. cit.*

MOOG, François. « Le contenu de la foi et les contenus de la catéchèse », *Loc. cit.*

d) Christian life formation geared towards serving the kingdom of God

To become a disciple of Christ is to become a sign of the kingdom of God at work in the world. It is a matter of pursuing Christ's mission which is to "humanize", to transfigure the Human being through God's Love. An active faith is manifested in particular by participating in "the safeguarding for the common home"¹⁴, by being involved alongside all those who work for peace, justice and inclusion. This vocation is both that of the whole Church and of each baptized person, who shares in Christ's mission through the work of the Holy Spirit.

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love [...] You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name." (Jn 15:9.16).

The role of Christian life formation is therefore to accompany and support individuals and the community in the discovery and realization of Christ's call: "Catechesis operates through this identity of human experience between Jesus the Master and his disciple and teaches to think like him, to act like him, to love like him."¹⁵

How can we determine if a Christian life formation is oriented towards the service of the kingdom of God? Here are some of the features or characteristics:

- Christian life formation intended for all age groups is **aimed at the development of an adult faith**, that is, faith which is freely embraced and fertile. It is not a matter of neglecting the catechesis of children or young people. Rather, it is about developing approaches that consider the challenges of spiritual development at each stage of life, knowing that the development of an adult faith is always in the making.
- Christian life formation **nurtures in various ways the call of Baptism to proclaim, celebrate and serve**, which are the three facets of the vocation of the baptized, "[a]s Christ was anointed, Priest, Prophet and King."¹⁶
- This call is **directed towards the "salvation of the world"**, and not towards the self-preservation of the Church or her own future.
- In this spirit, and in connection with the previous reference points, Christian life formation promotes the development of a **capacity to listen and discern the signs of God's kingdom at work through the action of the Holy Spirit**. Reinterpretation in the light of the Gospel is a particularly fruitful means of Christian life formation. Sometimes it deals with events or concerns while at other times it focuses on actions or commitments by exploring their bright and dark sides, even including failures or dead ends, so as to enlighten them with the word of God.

¹⁴ Evocation of the title of Pope Francis Laudato Si's letter (Praise be to you) on the safeguarding of the common house (2015), inviting all Christians to participate in the safeguarding of the environment and greater justice for the poor.

¹⁵ A CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, General Directory for Catechesis, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

¹⁶ *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, n° 225: Prayer of the anointing of the baptized with the holy chrism.



Group work

- What are our discoveries and/or questions about this point of reference?
- How does this point of reference inspire us in our own process of missionary conversion?
- * TIP: Keep a record of your thoughts in preparation for the synthesis at the end of this module.

(in french only)



RESOURCES TO FURTHER DEVELOP YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THIS POINT OF REFERENCE IF NEEDED

ASSEMBLÉE DES ÉVÊQUES DU QUÉBEC. *Op. cit.*, p. 14-27: « Évangélisation et humanisation »; p. 36-38 : « À quelle espérance l'Église est-elle appelée? ».

CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY. *Op. cit.*, n°s 17-19: "The Field that Is the World".

e) Christian life formation embodied in a culture

The purpose of Christian life formation is to "open up to the encounter with Christ, a path of total humanization for people and for the world."¹⁷

The Gospel is proposed not as an invitation to depart from one's human condition, but rather as an experience of entering into the heart of what makes us fully human in the following of Christ. This is why the language, attitudes, practices and organization of Christian life formation must constantly adapt itself by taking into account the lives of the people to be guided as well as their culture and social life.

What are the signs of a Christian life formation embodied in a culture?

Here are some of the features or characteristics:

- **First and foremost, you must listen to people** is as it is about taking an interest in their concerns, questions and aspirations while paying attention to their sensibilities, languages and cultural backgrounds. People's actual circumstances in terms of time, location, social and relationship factors must also be taken into account.
- Listening to people **must be accompanied by paying attention to the debates, social issues**, concerns, and existential questions raised not only by individuals, but also by larger groups. It is about recognizing the positive elements of the culture as well as those that need to be addressed.
- Such attention to people and social issues must not only precede any proposal for Christian life formation, but **must also guide it throughout its implementation** without omitting its evaluation and reappraisal.
- This implies that the Gospel should never be proclaimed as foreign content or doctrine unrelated to the concerns of the world in language difficult to understand. On the contrary, the Word of God is always embodied in human words as it always resonates and operates in new ways in our lives not unlike leaven in dough or a seed in the soil of our experiences. In this sense, **the contents of Christian life formation are not drawn elsewhere, but from everything that weaves human existence**, where God stands present and makes his Kingdom sprout.

*"The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts."*¹⁸



Group work

- What are our discoveries and/or questions about this point of reference?
- How does this point of reference inspire us in our own process of missionary conversion?
- * TIP: Keep a record of your thoughts in preparation for the synthesis at the end of this module.

(in french only)



RESOURCES TO FURTHER DEVELOP YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THIS POINT OF REFERENCE IF NEEDED

ASSEMBLÉE DES ÉVÊQUES DU QUÉBEC. *Op. cit.*, p. 14-27 : « Évangélisation et humanisation ».

CONGRÉGATION POUR LE CLERGÉ. *Op. cit.*, n°s 109-110 : « L'inculturation du message évangélique ».

¹⁷ ASSEMBLY OF QUEBEC CATHOLIC BISHOPS, *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁸ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes (On the Church in the Modern World)*, n° 1.

Rereading the testimonies in the light of the points of reference discussed above

As a group, review the testimonies studied in the previous section (2.) while paying attention to the reference points presented above.



What features of missionary Christian life formation can be identified in them? By putting yourself in the shoes of the people who have share their experiences, which missionary narrative has / narratives have been lived?

- *What has been abandoned or put into question?*
- *What has been decided or tested?*

In the light of this reinterpretation, review your answers to the second question asked about each reference point: how do they inspire us in our own missionary conversion process?

4. Shaping a missionary vision of Christian life formation inspired by the points of reference

You have probably noticed several links or reconciliations among the points of reference presented: which ones seem most obvious to you?

In fact, these points of reference are interdependent, and together they form a dynamic missionary vision, which can also be seen in the testimonies on practices. Experience shows that when changes are made in one direction or the other, it can have an impact on other dimensions.



Putting it in words

- In the light of what has emerged from your discussions (discoveries, questions, and awareness), try to formulate in your own words the vision of a missionary Christian life formation inspired by these points of reference. This vision will guide you in the missionary transformations you want to bring about in your life.*



For us, missionary Christian life formation is...

[illegible]



Meditation on the Word of God

In order to let the word of God nurture this vision that we have just shaped and to place ourselves in an receptive attitude towards the mission entrusted to us by the Lord, here are two biblical texts¹⁹ to be meditated upon together (we can choose either, or both to draw connections between them).

The Narrative of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-14.22-24.32-33.36-42)

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

“ When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.’ All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ But others sneered and said, ‘They are filled with new wine.’

Peter Addresses the Crowd

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say [...] Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know – this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. [...]

This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. [...] Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.’

The First Converts

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what should we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.’ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. “

¹⁹ New Revised Standard Bible (NRSV) [www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/acts/2.html].



Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)

“ Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, ‘Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.’ (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go over to this chariot and join it.’ So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ He replied, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

‘Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.’

The eunuch asked Philip, ‘About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?’ Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?’ He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea. ”



Activities

- After a pause for personal reflection, we will take some time where everyone is free to share the word of God heard in these narratives.
- In rereading your statement (“For us, a missionary Christian life formation is...””) in the light of this sharing of the Word, does anything need to be modified or added?

5. Starting to think about How to Act Locally



At the end of this module, discuss the envisioned transformations to your practices:

- In our experience, what gaps or deviations are of greatest concern to us in relation to any of the reference points explored in this module?
- What should be changed or discarded?
- How can we innovate?
- What should be done as a priority?



To take the next step, [Module D: How to Act Locally?](#) provides you with tools to plan the changes to be made.

Resources for going further

To further your reflection, here are some resources to explore according to your needs:

(in french only)

CONGRÉGATION POUR LE CLERGÉ. *Directoire général pour la catéchèse*, 1997, n^{os} 90-91 : le catéchuménat baptismal, modèle inspirateur de la catéchèse missionnaire.

INSTITUT DE PASTORALE DES DOMINICAINS, DIOCÈSE DE SAINT-JÉRÔME ET OFFICE DE CATÉCHÈSE DU QUÉBEC, *À la rencontre de soi et de l'autre. Guide pratique pour vivre le dialogue pastoral*, publication par l'Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2013, p. 35-45 : « La visée évangélisatrice du dialogue pastoral ».

PAPE FRANÇOIS. *Exhortation apostolique Evangelii Gaudium (La Joie de l'Évangile) sur l'annonce de l'Évangile dans le monde d'aujourd'hui*, n^{os} 160-168 : « La catéchèse en contexte missionnaire ».

TREMBLAY, Sophie. « Se savoir précédés, voyager léger », dans Suzanne DESROCHERS et Yves GUÉRETTE (dir.), *Au cœur de la foi, la mission! Actes du colloque Prendre le tournant missionnaire en formation à la vie chrétienne*, Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2018, p. 17-24. On peut se procurer ce document sur le site de l'OCQ : [www.officedecatechese.qc.ca/formation/mission/actes.html].

Vidéo résumant cette conférence : [www.vimeo.com/234908981].



*Be daring,
get involved!*

FACILITATION TOOLS
for a Missionary Conversion
of Christian Life Formation

D

MODULE

How to act locally?



TRIPARTITE REFLECTION GROUP
ON THE FUTURE PATHS OF
CHRISTIAN LIFE FORMATION

How to Act Locally?

D

MODULE

OBJECTIVES

- As a team, identify and plan the desired transformations needed to implement a more missionary Christian life formation in one's community.
- Experiment with the changes considered while staying receptive to the Holy Spirit.



If it has not already been done, we have much to gain by reading the [Introduction](#) to the handbook which answers, among other questions, "How to use it?".



LEAD-IN



To be read, alone or as a group, to determine if you wish to follow the proposed process of reflection and discussion for this module.

Do you believe that you are ready to move onto the implementation stage of a more missionary Christian life formation in your community, but still have several questions or concerns about how to proceed? Then, this module is for you.

"We finally succeeded in clarifying our vision of a more missionary Christian life formation together. But we didn't equip ourselves to put it into action. What do we begin with? How do we go about it?"

"We've been saying to ourselves for a while now that we want a more missionary Christian life formation in our community. It's long overdue. We need to grab the bull by the horns! What are we waiting for? Let's get on with the practical concerns and the actual stages."

"I wonder if we have the means to achieve our ambitions: we very well want transformations, but will we have the resources, and more importantly, do we have the required skills?"



- What's your reaction to these comments?
- Which questions or concerns do you most identify with?

In this module, you will be provided with an approach and tools to identify the first changes to be implemented and to plan your activities or your project. This approach includes listening to the Word of God and praying, in an Ignatian spirit: "Pray, for everything depends on God, but act as if everything depends on you!"

Should you feel as you progress in this module the need to clarify or specify your vision of a more missionary Christian life formation, or to further expand on the reference points that will guide the changes to be implemented, do not hesitate to interrupt your reflection process while you work on [Module C: What's Our Destination?](#) Your work on [How to Act Locally?](#) will be all the more fruitful for it.

"Let us go forth, then, let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ. [...] I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life."¹

¹ POPE FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World. n° 49. Vatican Press.



REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION PROCESS



PROCESS OUTLINE

1. Where do we begin? A critical and constructive look at our practices: a worksheet for personal reflection and interaction.
2. Time for listening to the Word of God and prayer.
3. Plan the changes to be brought. Planning tool to work on individually followed by a group discussion in view of an informed assessment.



Approximate duration of this process • A minimum of 3.5 hours

1. Where do we start? A critical and constructive look at our practices: a personal reflection worksheet and exchange.

At the end of [Module C: What's Our Destination?](#), discernment is introduced² as a way of identifying how to change our practices so as to implement a more missionary Christian life formation: Is it about inventing something new, changing what already exists, abandoning a practice, or stopping a particular way of doing things? You should now further your thinking by identifying more precisely the first changes or transformations to be carried out.

Here is a worksheet to help you take a critical and constructive look at your practices, examined in light of the reference points that you set as priorities. While working with this tool, do not hesitate to review your statement of a missionary vision of Christian life formation, drafted during the 4th stage of the process proposed in [Module C: Where are we going?](#) In addition, you should also revise the material in the lead-in of the present workshop on [How to Act Locally?](#)³.

REFLEXION AND DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

Points of reference or PRIORITY objectives to be attained

Existing practices, behaviours or methods TO BE PRIVILEGED or STRENGTHENED

Existing practices, behaviours or methods TO BE CALLED INTO QUESTION or AVOIDED

DESIRED CHANGES (a new practice, attitude or new means to be developed)

Human and material RESOURCES we have at our disposal

NEEDS (what we need to accomplish the desired changes)

The worksheet was inspired by: INSTITUT DE PASTORALE DES DOMINICAINS, DIOCÈSE DE SAINT-JÉRÔME ET OFFICE DE CATÉCHÈSE DU QUÉBEC, *À la rencontre de soi et de l'autre. Guide pratique pour vivre le dialogue pastoral*, 2013, p. 46-50.

1.1. Personal Reflection

Each group member receives a copy of the worksheet above to take down the first elements he or she finds important so as not to forget them.

² See [Module C: What's Our Destination? Reflection and group discussion](#), section 5. [Starting to think about How to Act Locally](#), p. 16.

³ *Ibid.*



1.2. Group Work on Discernment and Planning

Everyone gets to share the insights from their personal reflection. This will enable you to hear all the ideas before making any choices.

The group should now draw up a common worksheet to display their shared findings from the previous exercise. This worksheet can either be presented via a projector or by reproducing the grid on the board and using post-its to note the common elements. Either method will help the discernment and planning activities that will follow (3.).



Here are some guidelines for a fruitful group discussion

1. In a first round, each group member is welcomed to take the floor without any interruption so as to better listen to each other (2 minutes for each member).
2. In the next round, everyone can speak more freely, but the discussion must always flow among the members in an attempt to ensure that no one monopolize the floor as mutual listening is always the norm.
3. It would be wise to entrust one person in the group with the facilitation task while ensuring that he or she can speak on the same level as the others. His or her role is to promote a better flow of conversation in compliance with these instructions and the time allotted to each person.

2. Time to listen to the Word of God and pray

Before going further with the planning task, let's listen to the Word of God and meditate so as to allow the Holy Spirit to guide our work.

2.1. Listening to the Word of God⁴

A reading from the first letter of Saint-John Love One Another

" We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us – and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. " (1 Jn 3:14-18)

A reading from the Gospel

" Then he looked up at his disciples and said: '[...] I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house.' " (Lk 6:20.47-49)

2.2. Meditation



Taizé — Jesus Christ Bread of Life:
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPRtfFg9aFA]

Let a biblical verse or spontaneous prayer rise up in you. We can start the chorus again after a few interventions.

⁴ New Revised Standard Bible (NRSV) [www.biblestudytools.com/nrs].



2.3. Dialogue

- *What does this meditation on the Word inspire us with regard to the missionary transformations we wish to plan?*
- *What attitude / attitudes or relationship quality / qualities do we want to develop as a team?*
- *How can we help each other to implement these attitudes and relationship qualities?*



Note what emerges from this exchange so that you can refer to it later in the planning process.

2.4. Discernment

Having concluded this discussion nurtured by the Word of God, now attempt as a group to discern what seems to be the first change to be made. You can then engage in concrete planning using the tool below.

3. Planning the changes to be implemented

Here is a worksheet that will allow you to plan your project or actions without losing sight of the previous elements of reflection from this process. Namely, the critical and constructive view of your practices (see 1.2, page 3) as well as the attitudes and relational qualities to experience them evangelically (see Discussion following the meditation on the Word in 2.3 and 2.4 above).

| TO WHAT AIM? Reference point or objective to be reached for a more missionary formation of Christian life | |
|---|--|
| What? | |
| For whom? | |
| By whom? | |
| How? | |
| Attitudes or Relational qualities | |
| When? | |
| Where? | |
| Our resources | |
| Our need | |

As per the COMITÉ DE L'ÉDUCATION CHRÉTIENNE of the Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops, *REGROUPEMENT DES RESPONSABLES DIOCÉSAINS DE LA FORMATION À LA VIE CHRÉTIENNE ET OFFICE DE CATÉCHÈSE DU QUÉBEC, Chemins de foi. Guide pour la formation des adultes à la vie chrétienne*, published by l'Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2008, p. 45.

3.1. Personal reflection

Each group member receives a copy of the worksheet above to note the initial elements that he or she feels are important and should not be forgotten.



3.2. Group work on discernment and planning

The group should now draw up a common worksheet to display their shared findings from the previous exercise.⁵ This worksheet can either be presented via a projector or by reproducing the grid on the board and using post-its to note the common elements. Either method will help the discernment and planning activities below.

As a team using your list of shared elements, discern what is converging and what requires choices or additions to be made to complete the planning phase. This task is made easier given the convenience of being able to move, remove, and add Post-its on the board.

3.3. Last sharing

Once the group planning is complete, you can take a short time to share and pray so as to be led by the Holy Spirit throughout the experiment that is about to begin.

- What Word of God supports or inspires us to implement this action plan or project?

Suggestions

*“ We know that all things
work together for good for those who love God,
who are called according to his purpose. “
(Rom 8:28)*

*“ If we live by the Spirit,
let us also be guided by the Spirit. “
(Gal 5:25)*



A reminder

At the end of the discussion, allow time to review the experiment using the resources provided in [Module E: A little higher, a little further!](#)

Resources for going further

Here are some resources to explore depending on your needs to expand on the following topics:

To work on your attitudes and interpersonal skills (in french only)

INSTITUT DE PASTORALE DES DOMINICAINS, DIOCÈSE DE SAINT-JÉRÔME ET OFFICE DE CATÉCHÈSE DU QUÉBEC. *À la rencontre de soi et de l'autre. Guide pratique pour vivre le dialogue pastoral*, publication par l'Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2013 :

1^{re} partie « **Je me dispose au dialogue** », p. 7-74 : travail sur les bases du dialogue pastoral (visée relationnelle et évangélique); p. 36-41 : « À la manière de Jésus ».

2^e partie « **Je passe à l'action** », p. 75-151 : pistes pratiques pour vivre le dialogue pastoral dans différents chantiers (Premiers contacts, Animation, Entrevue, Liturgie et Aménagement d'une démarche).

COMITÉ DE L'ÉDUCATION CHRÉTIENNE DE L'ASSEMBLÉE DES ÉVÊQUES DU QUÉBEC, REGROUPEMENT DES RESPONSABLES DIOCÉSAINS DE LA FORMATION À LA VIE CHRÉTIENNE ET OFFICE DE CATÉCHÈSE DU QUÉBEC. *Chemins de foi. Guide pour la formation des adultes à la vie chrétienne*, publication par l'Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2008 :

« **Des attitudes à développer** » : p. 34-37.

« **Une route à poursuivre** » : p. 53-55.

HOUTEVELS-MINET, Reinilde. *Il nous parlait en chemin. La catéchèse paroissiale : Communauté, Parole, Chemin*, Bruxelles, Lumen Vitæ, « Dossier de pédagogie catéchétique », n° 12, 1999 :

« **Les sept attitudes catéchétiques** » : p. 23-30.

OFFICE DE CATÉCHÈSE DU QUÉBEC, avec la collaboration d'André BEAUCHAMP. *Travailler en groupe*, Ottawa, Novalis, 2005 :

Chapitre 5 : « **Gérer des conflits** », p. 76-86.

Chapitre 6 : « **Communiquer avec tact** », p. 87-100.

⁵ You can refer to the instructions “[Here are some guidelines for a fruitful group discussion](#)” in section 1.2. on p. 3 of Module D.

Planning and implementing a project (in french only)

AERENS, Luc (dir.). *Transitions en catéchèse. Expériences vécues, signes d'un renouveau*, Bruxelles, Lumen Vitæ, coll. « Tous en chemin », 2010, 144 p.

COMITÉ DE L'ÉDUCATION CHRÉTIENNE DE L'ASSEMBLÉE DES ÉVÊQUES DU QUÉBEC, REGROUPEMENT DES RESPONSABLES DIOCÉSAINS DE LA FORMATION À LA VIE CHRÉTIENNE ET OFFICE DE CATÉCHÈSE DU QUÉBEC. *Chemins de foi. Guide pour la formation des adultes à la vie chrétienne*, publication par l'Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2008 :

Chapitre 3 : « Bâtir un projet », p. 38-51.

OFFICE DE CATÉCHÈSE DU QUÉBEC, avec la collaboration d'André BEAUCHAMP. Travailler en groupe, Ottawa, Novalis, 2005 :

Chapitre 1 : « Planifier le travail en groupe », p. 11-27.

Chapitre 4 : « Gérer un projet », p. 67-75.

Notes

[illegible]

*Be daring,
get involved!*

FACILITATION TOOLS
for a Missionary Conversion
of Christian Life Formation

*A little higher,
a little further*



A Little Higher, a little Further!

E

OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate the transformations carried out and review the missionary conversion journey undertaken.
- Aim for continuous improvement and constantly adjust to changing circumstances.



If it has not already been done, we have much to gain by reading the [Introduction](#) to the handbook which answers, among other questions, "How to use it?".

PRÉSENTATION DU MODULE



To be read, alone or as a group, to determine if you wish to follow the proposed process of reflection and discussion for this module.

If you have already made changes in your practices or attitudes, or if you have started a process of experimentation with a new project in a missionary spirit, this module may be of interest to you. It addresses questions and concerns such as:

- Have we succeeded in making the desired changes?
- Were our objectives relevant? Have they been achieved?
- Were the means chosen appropriate?
- Have we been listening enough to the people we were trying to reach?
- Are we seeing signs that a missionary conversion is well underway?
- Could we do even better or go further?



Which question(s) or concern(s) do you most identify with?

This module provides evaluation and review tools to help you discern which missionary conversions have been carried out and which still need to be undertaken in the light of the Gospel's calls.

Should you feel the need, while in this module, to work on dimensions of missionary conversion that are the subject of another module¹, do not hesitate to interrupt your process for the time to pursue one that is more adapted to your needs. Time spent on evaluation and review will only bear fruit later on.

The approach proposed in this module can be repeated whenever you feel the need to refresh a topic to better adapt along the way or at a new juncture. It is part of a constant concern to listen in and discern the calls of the Holy Spirit, who animates all missionary activity.

Evaluation and review: Are they one and the same?



Evaluation makes it possible to verify the achievement of the objectives (accuracy, realism, surplus or deficiency) with regard to the participants, organizers, and leaders of the project, as well as the appropriate choice of means [...]. But its role is also to identify new needs and interests among people, which in itself can lead to new projects.²

¹ To get an overview of each module (objectives, an outline of the approach, and time requirements), look at the [Overview section at the beginning of the handbook](#).

² COMITÉ DE L'ÉDUCATION CHRÉTIENNE DE L'ASSEMBLÉE DES ÉVÊQUES DU QUÉBEC, REGROUPEMENT DES RESPONSABLES DIOCÉSAINS DE LA FORMATION À LA VIE CHRÉTIENNE ET OFFICE DE CATÉCHÈSE DU QUÉBEC, *Chemins de foi. Guide pour la formation des adultes à la vie chrétienne*, publication par l'Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2008, p. 50.



MODULE



In this module, an **evaluation period** is proposed which focuses on the practices or project experimented with. While it always involves some subjectivity, the assessment relies on concrete or observable evidence as well as on considering the perspectives of others to verify the attainment of goals or the effectiveness of changes that have been made. It informs the decisions needed for the future of the project concerning the deficiencies to be corrected, the new realities to be taken into account or the next steps to be taken.



*In the Bible, it is often through **rereading** that our ancestors in Faith recognized the presence of God in their lives. To read again is also to measure the gap between what we have lived and what we want to live. It is to welcome our weakness and the forgiveness of our sin by placing ourselves before the merciful gaze of the Father.³*

Reinterpretation is a matter of contemplation and acceptance, in itself, of God's gaze on yourself and on your experience. It is less a question of verifying or measuring than of connecting to the core of what is lived, to our source and to our relationships (our self, others and God). Reinterpretation is proposed throughout the process, both as an extension of personal reflection and a means of deepening team discussions.

In the perspective of a missionary conversion, the module's approach therefore proposes an approach where **evaluation integrates reinterpretation** while focusing less on the effectiveness or performance of practices or projects according to economic or organizational criteria (even if these points of view are legitimate) than on the evangelical and missionary coherence between intentions and attitudes or actions implemented. Thus, trial and error as well as doubt and risk-taking have their place in the process of the missionary transformation of our practices, provided that we let ourselves be led by the Spirit of Christ, who is the way of resurrection.

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION PROCESS



PROCESS OUTLINE

0. Preliminary step (optional): Individual assessment of one's dispositions and catechetical attitude as experienced in a meeting.
1. Evaluation of the tried practices or project followed by a reinterpretation of the progress made: personal reflection using an evaluation worksheet, a group discussion, and a review in the light of God's Word.
2. A missionary conversion always in the making through dialogue.



Approximate duration of this approach (steps 2 and 3, the preliminary step is not included in this approximation of the duration) • between 2 and 3 hours.

0. Optional preliminary step • Individual assessment of one's dispositions and catechetical attitude experienced in a meeting⁴

Here is a tool that can help anyone involved in a Christian life formation⁵ gathering to take stock of their dispositions and the catechetical attitude experienced during a meeting of their choice. It encourages a lucid and benevolent look at oneself and makes it possible to envisage certain transformations to be undergone. Returning to this tool after a few catechetical meetings can support a longer-term process of transformation.

³ Based on « *La relecture de vie* » on the website of *Secteur pastoral de Tresse* (Diocese of Bordeaux): [www.paroissetresses.fr/tous-au-service-de-tous/s-e-malades/accompagnement-spirituel/la-confession/la-relecture-de-vie].

⁴ Process inspired by Christian PHILIBERT, « *Le travail d'ainé dans la foi. Entre tension et équilibre* », *Ecclésia*, 2007, [on line] [www.cateain.ccf.fr/www/cate/sitetransition/Aine_dans_la_foi._C._Philibert.pdf] (page consulted on March 9, 2018).

⁵ A person can intervene as a catechist, facilitator or guide within the framework of a personalized Christian life formation program or in groups with people of different ages and in different situations.

**Note**

The use of the tool below will produce more results if support is provided by a person responsible for Christian life formation (or other learning activities) in the community.

0.1. My dispositions

- *How did I prepare myself for this meeting?*
- *How did I place myself in the presence of God, before and during this meeting?*

0.2. My catechetical attitude

Attitude "[...] defines how to fulfill one's function (or hold his or her position). It is necessarily a personal choice based on ethics. Attitude is therefore a set of behaviours that guide how we interact with others. It may vary depending on the circumstances. The attitude adopted determines the tone of the interactions between people.⁵

Catechetical attitude is apparent in the sum total of my contributions and ways of being, which more or less consciously reflect my way of seeing my role as a catechist, facilitator or guide in Christian life formation, or as an elder in the Faith.

In a catechetical intervention, our adopted attitude oscillates between two poles in tension.

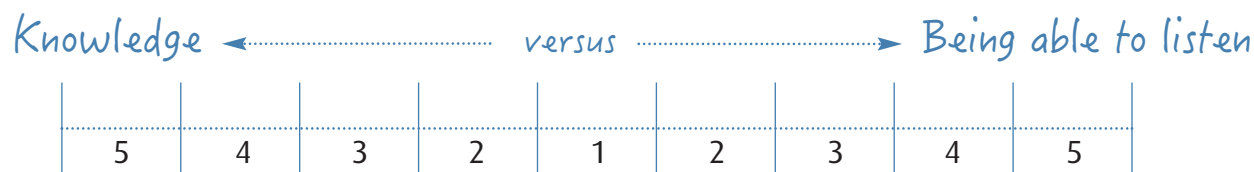
**Instructions**

For each of the opposing forces presented below, evaluate your catechetical attitude by ranking it on a scale between the two poles where the number 1 represents the point of equilibrium between the two extremes represented by the number 5.

**The tension between knowledge and listening**

On the one hand, we have knowledge which we want to transmit, but on the other hand we want to be receptive and listen to others. This is the tension we find ourselves in as we listen with empathy and attention to trial and error, hesitation, and doubt, which reveals hollow patches that we would like to fill with our knowledge and with what is brimming inside of us.

By observing my attitude (my involvement et my way of being), I will try to rank it on the following scale:



- *On what factual evidence is my answer based?*

In the light of this evaluation...

- *What seems to me to be on the right track?*
- *What do I feel called to transform?*

⁵ Sophie TREMBLAY, « *Se savoir précédés, voyager léger* », in Suzanne DESROCHERS and Yves GUÉRETTE (dir.), *Au cœur de la foi, la mission! Actes du colloque Prendre le tournant missionnaire en formation à la vie chrétienne*, Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2018, p. 17 (quoting Paul MAELA, *L'accompagnement : une posture professionnelle spécifique*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2004, p. 153). This document is available on the OCQ website: [www.officedecatechese.qc.ca/formation/mission/actes.html].



The tension between power and fraternity

To be regarded as a guide is an acknowledgment of my competence. However, this very competence, whether we like it or not, is a form of power that I must accept as a twofold responsibility, namely my responsibility as a human being and my responsibility as a Christian. We are running the risk of confusing the path with the truth, that is, of confusing our own commitment to Faith and our projection onto others of what would be good for them. In other words, we must strike a balance between the abuse of power, which drives me to be demanding towards others, and the refusal of any power, which leaves them alone and powerless to deal with their questions.

By observing my stance (my involvement and my ways of being), I will try to rank it on the following scale:



- On what factual evidence is my answer based?

In the light of this evaluation...

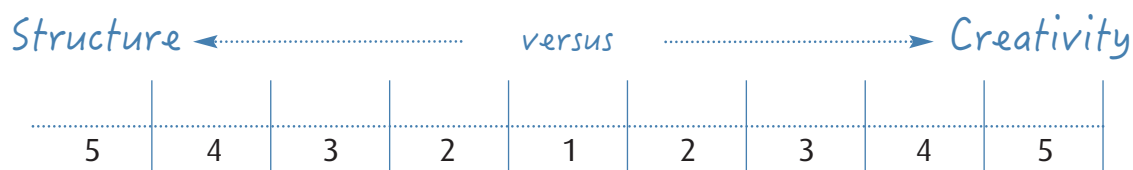
- What seems to me to be on the right track?
- What do I feel called to transform?



The tension between structure and creativity

Each meeting is always new and full of unexpected surprises given that each itinerary is different and marked by unforeseen events. We can map out steps, but we have to accept that they are not linear. We know that, as is the case in every learning process, there will be setbacks, doubts about what we thought was sound, evasion, and abandonments.

By observing my attitude (my involvement et my way of being), I will try to rank it on the following scale:



- On what factual evidence is my answer based?

In the light of this evaluation...

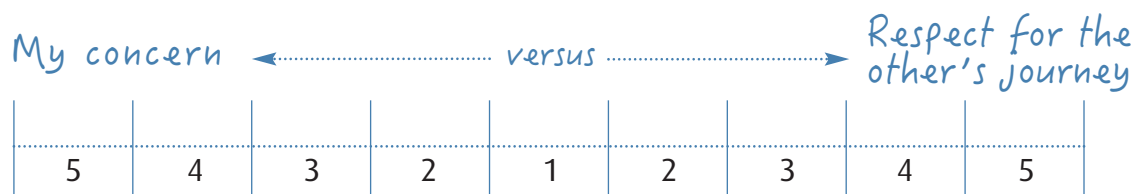
- What seems to me to be on the right track?
- What do I feel called to transform?



The tension between my concern and respect for the other's journey

Listening to others and looking at them show a marked degree of attention that brings them into existence, allowing them to build the self-esteem they need to feel worthy of love in the eyes of Christ and in the eyes of others. Listening to and looking at somebody also means shrouding him or her in our concern. But we must then be careful not to confine him or her to our own system of acknowledgement. How could he freely choose his own path if he feels indebted for what we do for him or if he is afraid of losing our approval every time he thinks differently from us?

By observing my attitude (my involvement et my way of being), I will try to rank it on the following scale:



- On what factual evidence is my answer based?

In the light of this evaluation...

- What seem to me to be on the right track?
- What do I feel called to transform?

0.3. Spiritual reinterpretation

Choose the evangelical scene that draws me the most from the proposed narratives below; or propose another narrative that comes to mind.

Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar Near Jericho (*Lk 18:35-43*)

Jesus Raises the Widow's Son at Nain (*Lk 7:11-17*)

Jesus and Zacchaeus (*Lk 19:1-10*)

Jesus Cures a Deaf Man (*Mk 7:31-37*)

Look at Jesus and contemplate His relationships by noticing His way of being, His gaze on people, His gestures, His words, His listening, His receptiveness, etc.

In these narratives, what challenges to go further on the path of a missionary conversion do I infer?

1. Evaluation of the tried practices or project and review of the progress made

1.0. Optional preliminary step

If relevant, the process can be initiated by sharing the reflections generated by the "Individual assessment of one's dispositions and catechetical attitude as experienced in a meeting" in section 0 above.



Everybody shares their personal reflection insights based on the evaluation worksheet on catechetical posture (see 0.2).

Dialogue based on the spiritual review (see 0.3):

- What challenges are we facing in order to go further on the path of missionary conversion?
- How can we help each other? What do we need?



1.1. Personal Reflection

Each member of the group receives a copy of the worksheet below to make his or her personal assessment of the transformations that have been implemented for a more missionary Christian life formation based on the attitudes, relational qualities (BEING), and experimented actions or projects (TO DO). The personal reflection session will be followed by an exchange.

| TO WHAT AIM? Anticipated objective (original intention or point of reference) | |
|---|--|
| What has been put into practice: attitudes, relational qualities (BEING) and/or actions or projects (DOING) | |
| Observed effects or changes | |
| Difficulties encountered or questions | |
| Learning opportunities | |
| Next challenges | |

1.2. Pooling, discussing and reinterpreting

1.2.1. Pooling everybody's personal reflection insights using the evaluation worksheet above.



Here are a few simple guidelines towards a fruitful discussion

1. In a first round, each group member is welcomed to take the floor without any interruption so as to better listen to each other (2 minutes for each member).
2. In the next round, everyone can speak more freely, but the discussion must always flow among the members in an attempt to ensure that no one monopolize the floor as mutual listening is always the norm.
3. It would be wise to entrust one person in the group with the facilitation task while ensuring that he or she can speak on the same level as the others. His or her role is to promote a better flow of conversation in compliance with these instructions and the time allotted to each person.

1.2.2. Discussion • Looking at the road travelled

- What are our strengths?
- What are our limits or weaknesses?
- Do we see any signs of a missionary conversion already underway? Which ones?
- Do we see any signs of a missionary conversion still in the works? Which ones?



1.2.3. Reinterpretation in the light of the Word of God

Like Mary, who retained all the events and meditated on them in her heart (Lk 2:19), take the time to review the events of the experiment by seeking to reread them in faith.



Reading

Group reading of one⁶ Bible excerpt⁷ from the following two, or suggest any other biblical text that comes to mind.

Jacob's Dream at Bethel (Gen 28:11-17)

" He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.' Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it!' And he was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' "

Jacob Wrestles at Peniel (Gen 32:22-31)

" The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.' Then Jacob asked him, 'Please tell me your name.' But he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.' The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip. "

Elijah Meets God at Horeb (1 Kings 19:8-15)

" He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' Then the Lord said to him, 'Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. "

⁶ It is best to prepare this choice in advance.

⁷ New Revised Standard Bible (NRSV) [www.biblestudytools.com/nrsv].



Les Disciples d'Emmaüs (Lk 24:13-17.27)

“ Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still, looking sad. [...] Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. ”



Sharing

- Which words from the Bible help me to discern the presence of God in what we have experienced?
- What signs of his presence and action can I discern?
- What does this reinterpretation reveal to me?

Take the time to offer this reflection in prayer.

2. A missionary conversion always in the making

Here are some questions for a group discussion in order to determine how to continue the process of missionary conversion in a spirit of permanent conversion:

- Which points of reference⁸ have remained in the shadows? Which ones now need attention?
- Are we always listening in on the field (on the lookout for cutting-edge ideas and contemporary thirsts), even if we have had some success?
- How do we want to continue the work of missionary conversion that we have undertaken?
- What Word of God enlightens or sustains us on this path of conversion?
- Would it be the right time to seek out new stakeholders to go further (e.g. other teams, other partnerships, other volunteers to join our team)?



Depending on your needs, you can continue the reflection and discussion process from any of the other modules in this handbook⁹ in order to explore certain aspects further. You can also enrich your reflection process by using the materials suggested in the Resources for Going Further section at the end of each module.

Resources for Going Further

Here are some resources to explore depending on your needs to expand on the following topics:

For evaluating

COMITÉ DE L'ÉDUCATION CHRÉTIENNE DE L'ASSEMBLÉE DES ÉVÊQUES DU QUÉBEC, REGROUPEMENT DES RESPONSABLES DIOCÉSAINS DE LA FORMATION À LA VIE CHRÉTIENNE ET OFFICE DE CATÉCHÈSE DU QUÉBEC. *Chemins de foi. Guide pour la formation des adultes à la vie chrétienne*, publication par l'Office de catéchèse du Québec, 2008 :
« Prendre le temps d'évaluer », p. 50-51.

For reinterpreting

ALARIE, Pierre. « Faire une relecture de son aventure spirituelle », site InterBible :

[www.interbible.org/interBible/decouverte/groupe/2008/grb_081007.htm].

THOLENCE, Alice. « La relecture de vie », site du Secteur pastoral de Tresse (diocèse de Bordeaux) :

[www.paroissetresses.fr/tous-au-service-de-tous/s-e-malades/accompagnement-spirituel/la-confession/la-relecture-de-vie].

« Les bienfaits de la relecture », *Vie chrétienne*, n° 453, avril 2000 :

[www.viechretienne.fr/article/les-bienfaits-de-la-relecture--,142.php].

« Relire sa vie pour y lire Dieu », Supplément de *Vie Chrétienne*, n° 354, Nouvelle édition, 2010.

A missionary conversion always in the making

BERGERON, Patrice, et al., *Une Église en sortie. Relecture d'une expérience missionnaire auprès des jeunes*, Montréal/ Namur/ Paris, Novalis/ Lumen Vitae, 2018, 160 pages.

⁸ Look at the section on the reference points in [Module C: What's Our Destination?](#) p. 9-13. Identifying them is crucial to the process of [Module D: How to Act Locally?](#) p. 2.

⁹ See the OUR LEARNING ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE section in the [introduction of the handbook](#).

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. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father's infinite mercy.

Let us try a little harder to take the first step
and to become involved.

POPE FRANCIS, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*
on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, n° 24.

