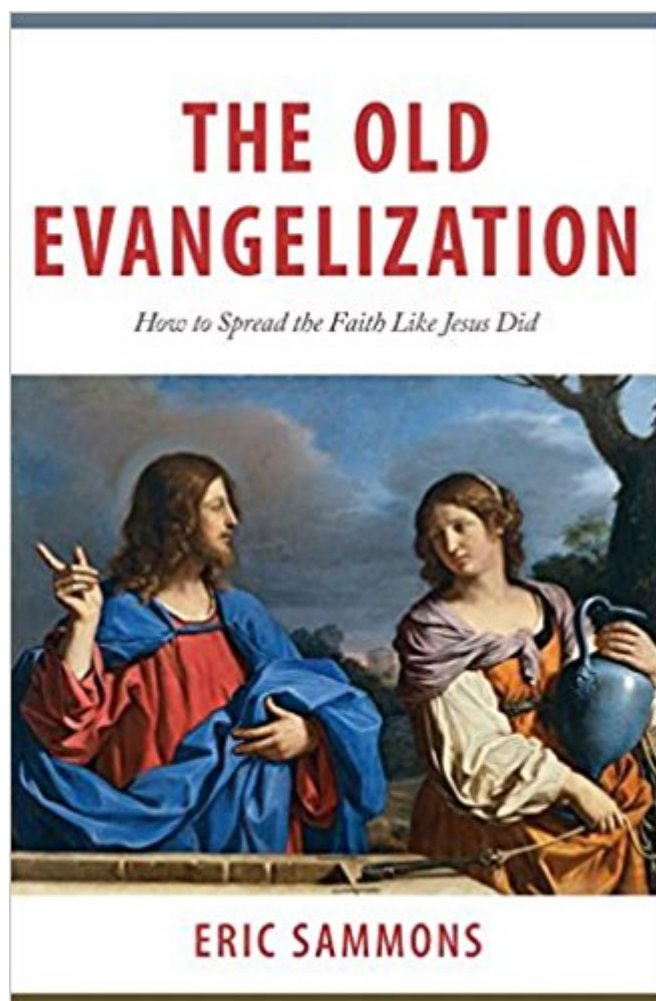


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# The Old Evangelization: How To Spread The Faith Like Jesus Did



## Synopsis

It seems like every day somebody comes out with a new trick for bringing people into the Faith. Mixing pop psychology with spiritual fads and marketing jargon, these techniques seem to last only until the next big idea comes around. And despite their hype, they usually don't win many souls. As a diocesan director of evangelization, Eric Sammons saw a lot of these trends come and go, without bearing fruit, until one day he finally had enough. If we're serious about spreading the gospel, he thought, the first place we should look is to the original master evangelist: Jesus himself. In *The Old Evangelization*, Sammons goes back to the source, taking a look at what Jesus did (and didn't do) when he preached the Good News and drawing out the lessons he taught us. All evangelization begins with a personal "encounter." And so Sammons examines Jesus' most instructive Gospel encounters--with the Samaritan woman at the well, for instance, or with the rich young man--and discovers within each a particular truth that, even 2,000 years later, can help us make new disciples. He also makes these truths concrete and accessible by showing how the saints practiced them, and by offering practical tips for reflecting on them and putting them to use. Evangelization is not an option but Christ's express command (Matt. 28:19-20). What better way to answer this call than by imitating his supreme example?

## Book Information

Paperback

Publisher: Catholic Answers Press (May 1, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1683570308

ISBN-13: 978-1683570301

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #239,499 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #164 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Church Growth #2049 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Catholicism #3665 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects

## Customer Reviews

Eric has written an immensely useful volume as he turns our attention to how Jesus and the saints

evangelized and serve as models of effective evangelization. All Catholics would do well to read, reflect on and implement the ideas in this book. --Adam Janke, National Program Director, St. Paul Street Evangelization

Really appreciate the balanced approach of personal experience and New Testament accounts of Jesus. The author starts with a challenge or difficulty of evangelizing, then shares scripture of how Jesus interacted and communicated with those he encountered. Then the author provides some commentary on what we can learn from Jesus in regards to sharing the faith. At the end of each chapter is an example from the life of a Saint, and lastly questions that could be used from group study or personal reflection and growth. This book is a delight to read, have immediately found value in the lessons, which applied to my relationships with others whom I love and want to have a personal encounter with our Lord. There are eleven chapters. 1. Jesus Commands His Disciples to Evangelize 2. Jesus Teaches the Value of Prayer 3. Jesus Does More than Welcome Others 4. Jesus Sometimes Fails to Bring About Conversion 5. Jesus Makes the Impossible Possible 6. Jesus Confronts the Devil 7. Jesus Refuses to Tolerate Sin 8. Jesus Doesn't Water Down His Teachings 9. Jesus Proclaims the Fullness of the Faith 10. Jesus Brings About Repentance 11. Jesus Arouses Our Reverence This book is for anyone interested in sharing the Good Word of Jesus Christ with others. Received the book on Friday, have read the first five chapters, looking forward to reading the rest and even rereading this very helpful book.

Eric puts away the fads and gimmicks that many modern people have come up with to evangelize and instead goes back to the beginning, to Jesus! He looks at how Jesus evangelized--mercifully, justly, intelligently--and then shares stories of how this works in our day and age. Practical, faithful to the Catholic Church, and encouraging. The book made me want to evangelize more boldly and as Christ did.

This book is a brilliant read. Eric writes in such an engaging manner that once you start reading you will have a hard time putting the book down. The main premise of the book is that the personal touch is the best method for lasting evangelization. Eric writes extensively from personal experience; both his experiences evangelizing from within and outside of the Catholic Church. This book is called the Old Evangelization because; it uses Jesus as the main example. It takes the way that Jesus' ministry worked and translates those into examples that can be tools for us to use in our own life. It does this with plenty of personal and ministry team examples. Part of

the description for the book states: "It seems like every day somebody comes out with a new trick for bringing people into the Faith. Mixing pop psychology with spiritual fads and marketing jargon, these techniques seem to last only until the next big idea comes around. And despite their hype, they usually don't win many souls. As a diocesan director of evangelization, Eric Sammons saw a lot of these trends come and go, without bearing fruit, until one day he finally had enough. If we're serious about spreading the gospel, he thought, the first place we should look is to the original master evangelist: Jesus himself. And that is really the greatest strength of the book. Eric's examples of things that have worked well, and also some that did not go as planned. By using Jesus as the blueprint Eric gets to the heart of the matter. Because of that Christ centered focus the Sections in this book are:

Introduction: An Evangelizing Man  
Getting Started  
1 Jesus Commands His Disciples to Evangelize  
2 Jesus Teaches the Value of Prayer  
3 Jesus Does More than Welcome Others  
4 Overcoming Doubts  
5 Jesus Sometimes Fails to Bring About Conversion  
6 Jesus Makes the Impossible Possible  
7 Joining the Battle  
8 Jesus Confronts the Devil  
9 Jesus Refuses to Tolerate Sin  
10 Jesus Doesn't Water Down His Teachings  
11 Being a Truly Catholic Evangelist  
12 Jesus Proclaims the Fullness of the Faith  
13 Jesus Brings About Repentance  
14 Jesus Arouses Our Reverence  
Conclusion: Jesus, Model Evangelist  
About the Author: Eric Sammons

This book begins with these words from Eric: "If you're reading this book, you're interested in evangelization. Perhaps you know that Christ commanded it, but you have no idea how to do it. Perhaps the thought of it makes you nervous, or even downright terrified. I'm here to remind you that evangelizing is an essential task for Catholics, and our Lord never gives us a task we can't perform. You don't need a degree in theology, and you don't need to be an eloquent speaker. You just need to have a love for Christ and a desire to tell others about him. And the rest of the book goes on to explain how to do that. One of the paragraphs in the book that I believe is central to the book and to Catholic Evangelization states: "When it comes to evangelization, many Catholics feel insecure when they compare themselves with Evangelicals, whose very name declares their desire to bring people to Jesus. So we borrow their methodology, thinking we'll just stick the Catholic stuff in at the end. This approach is fundamentally flawed. It assumes that Catholicism is merely Protestantism Plus. But in fact, all that Catholic stuff—including doctrines such as the Eucharist and the perpetual virginity of the Mary—is essential to the Christian faith. How, for instance, can one

teach about Christ's passion and death without teaching also about our participation in that passion and death during the Mass? Reception of the holy Eucharist is not incidental to the Christian life—it is indispensable: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53). Doctrine matters. And as Catholic, that last point must remain central. Doctrine does matter and we cannot water down the message to the point that it is no longer the Good News. We must be prepared for failures, for people who will not respond, maybe even people who will respond negatively. The results are not up to us. But our obedience is our responsibility. This book concludes with these words: "We too have been called to convert the world. Like Jesus, we may never travel much beyond our birthplace, and may never interact deeply with more than a few hundred people. Yet if we model ourselves on Jesus, we can have a life-changing impact on those around us. You have a circle of influence—your family, your friends, your neighbors, your coworkers, even the people you bump into regularly at the grocery store. You can use this influence to direct people toward Christ and his Church, or you can use it to direct people away from them. If you follow the example of Jesus and the principles of the great Catholic evangelizers of the past, as outlined in this book, you can have as profound an influence as Christ's first followers, who transformed a pagan culture into a Christian one and saw countless souls turn away from the path of destruction to the path of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Now let's get started! So pick up the book, give it a read and get started.

Technology changes--advances. But does human nature change--advance? Even an atheistic view of evolution would indicate that change is gradual, with humans being essentially the same throughout all of recorded history. Natural law rests upon the belief that there is a givenness to life: and that we have to conform to that reality or suffer the consequences. God is our Creator: He would know what we need to hear, and how we need to hear it. And Christ was true man and true God--moreover, we are to imitate Christ. The title of the book implies a contrast with "the new evangelization" which St. Pope JP II originally used to reference the fact that much of Christendom had lost the faith, and so we need to do something rare in history: RE-evangelize. However, that term has been commendeered by others to imply...what? The assumptions are not made explicit, because they are incoherent. But they amount to a claim that modern humans are fundamentally different from our ancestors, such that the approach of Christ--and the prophets, apostles, and saints--are now obsolete. That the approaches that created Christendom from a small group of

people in an upper room on Pentecost are no longer applicable. That, really, we should base our evangelization approaches on the ways of the world and the passing fads of our time. Obviously new technologies call for some changes in the methods of delivery, but even here the author focuses upon person-to-person evangelization--everyday interactions--which have not significantly changed since Biblical times. Drawing from two decades of practical experience, the author urges us to take the example of Christ seriously.

Mr. Sammons wasn't convincing. After reading his book, I don't have a good idea of how Jesus evangelised, or what the old evangelization entails. Plus, it was dry and dull.

It has a lot of info that I did not know

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