



THE YEAR OF
DISCIPLESHIP

How can I Gently Evangelize my Family at Thanksgiving?

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, many of us will get together with family and friends—some of whom share our faith and others who do not. For lukewarm or fallen-away family members, what can we do—other than leading with a joyful example of Christian love and charity—to help them reconnect with Christ and the Church? “I’m going over Thanksgiving to visit my sister who is a lukewarm Catholic. I’m thinking about how to evangelize since there’s a very great danger of offending her,” said Mike when he called in to [Father Simon Says](#)™ on Relevant Radio®.

Father Simon replied: “Do this: when you take leave of her this time, say, ‘Would you mind if I said a prayer for you?’ Take her hand and close your eyes ... and say, ‘Lord, I ask you to bless my sister and give her the peace and happiness that she needs.’ That simply, not a big long thing. And if she says, ‘Well I don’t want you to pray with me.’ Say, ‘Just real simple, nothing big. It would make me feel better.’ Put the weight on yourself: ‘This isn’t for you, this is for me. It would make me feel better if I could just say a little prayer with you because I love you so much.’ How does that sound, do you think you could do that?” “Sure, very good,” said Mike.

“That’ll work; I don’t think that will offend her. And remember, my definition of evangelism is to get people to stop saying ‘he’ or ‘it’ or ‘they’ about God and the Church, but to get them to say, ‘You,’” said Fr. Simon.

You don’t want to come off as preachy or judgmental, as that can push family members even further away. But gently and lovingly leading them closer to Christ is an important thing to do. Many lukewarm Catholics haven’t grown deeper in their faith because they haven’t made a personal connection with God. Getting to know God on a more intimate level and being comfortable talking to Him can work wonders. Start by simply opening the door to prayer and see where it leads.

And no matter what opportunities you may or may not have to evangelize, don’t forget to continue praying for your loved ones who are lukewarm or fallen-away from their Catholic Faith. Your prayers are effective—even if you don’t see it—and can work wonders in softening hearts.

Our Lady, Star of Evangelization, pray for us!