

Missionary Preparation Guide

Missionary work is a rewarding experience which comes necessarily laden with many demands. As Sirach 2:1 says, ***“My son, if you come forward to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for temptation.”*** While NET sets out to equip all its missionaries by beginning each mission year with an extensive and comprehensive five-week training program, missionaries will face many challenges in their own interior life, daily relationships, and in the ministry environment. Missionaries will need emotional, physical, social, and spiritual resilience to persevere through the trials inherent to preaching the Gospel on NET.

Life as a NET missionary does not follow a typical structure, such as a 9-5 job would. It is often in flux. Life-giving habits must be developed, enabling missionaries to handle whatever the mission throws at them. Below, we’ve highlighted some helpful suggestions to aid missionaries in developing the resiliency necessary for the mission. We think, if adopted, these attitudes and behaviours will help soon-to-be missionaries prepare better for the lifestyle of NET and develop a greater capacity to receive NET’s formation when the time comes.



Please note:

- **None of these behaviours are required for you to practice prior to your NET year.** However, through much experience, these behaviours have shown themselves to greatly aid missionary life.
- **These suggestions are not an exhaustive summary.** We offer them as suggestions that, if employed, will greatly benefit a missionary’s experience and effectiveness in the mission field. The lifestyle of a missionary is indeed spiritual, but it is also very practical.

Human Preparation

In Mark 12:31, Jesus gives us the second greatest commandment: “The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Jesus implies that you cannot love others unless you love yourself, willing your own good. If we are to showcase and invite young people across Canada into the saving relationship with Jesus, then we ourselves must have this same saving relationship. That relationship necessitates loving and caring for your own good!

Additionally, as humans, we have a finite amount of willpower. The quicker we can develop constructive routines (habits), the less energy is consumed by trying to do good. These habits, or virtues, allow us to do the good more easily and readily.

A VIRTUE IS A “HABITUAL AND FIRM DISPOSITION TO DO GOOD” - CCC 1833

With both of these concepts in mind, we see the need to cultivate the many facets of caring for ourselves and make them habitual. It is vital! Developing healthy and proactive habits allows us to care for ourselves, in our uniqueness, within the limitations of NET’s ministry.



Morning & Evening Routine

How you go to bed influences how you begin the next day, and how you begin your day influences how the rest of the day unfolds. Consistency is the name of the game. Look at developing such practices as:

- **Consistent Early Wake-Up Time:** For many reasons, ministry often demands an early wake-up. Missionaries can expect to wake up between 6:00 and 6:45 am. Begin practicing an early wake-up time. This will build your stamina to perform consistently, regardless of the schedule any day throws at you.
- **Morning and Evening Routines:** Begin to learn, through experimentation, healthy practices that you need to start and end your days well. Do the same things each day and in the same order. This can help release the natural hormones that regulate your sleep cycle, allowing you to wake up and fall asleep each day. Prioritize prayer as part of your morning routine. For example:



Morning Routine

- **6:00 AM** - Wake up and offer the day to God
- **6:05 AM** - Drink water/coffee
- **6:15 AM** - Exercise
- **6:30 AM** - Shower, brush teeth, and prep for the day
- **7:00 AM** - Prayer
- **7:30 AM** - Breakfast
- **7:45 AM** - Ready to leave house

Evening Routine

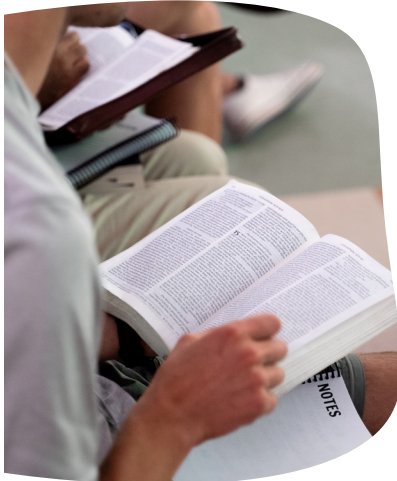
- **9:00 PM** - Prep for next day (ex., lunch, put phone away/turn off for the night)
- **9:15 PM** - Brush teeth and get ready for bed
- **9:35 PM** - Nightly Ignatius Examen and/or other personal prayers
- **9:45 PM** - Lights out

- **Exercise:** Engage in at least 10 minutes of daily physical exercise that can be done within a small space and utilizes only your body weight. This will set you up to care for your body's need to exert itself while accommodating the typical challenges of working out while serving on NET, often in spaces in which you are a guest. Some example exercises could be: burpees, squats, situps/crunches, lunges, planks, wall sits, run/sprints, military pushups, leg raises, etc.

Spiritual Preparation

Prayer

One of the best ways to prepare for training and your NET year is to set aside time daily to be with our Lord. If you don't have an established prayer time, start now! The goal is to establish the habit of prayer, which is our relationship with God.



Planning for Prayer

It has been said that a failure to plan is a plan destined to fail. With that in mind, we recommend creating a prayer plan that suits your current lifestyle. We suggest you answer these questions to help:

- **Where will you pray?** Put yourself somewhere you can be free of distraction and as uninhibited in your response to God as possible.
- **When will you pray?** Choose a time that you can confidently keep consistent and where you have enough energy to enter into prayer.
- **What will you pray with?** Pick something to reflect on that helps you hear God's voice.

Your Personal Prayer Time

Now that you have a plan, it's time to pray. If you don't have a set form of prayer, we propose you use this four-part plan.

1. Enter His Presence

Sit in silence, focusing on the Lord. Ask Him to prepare your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to help you pray.

2. Thanksgiving & Praise

Thank the Lord for what He has done for you, and what He has given you. Praise Him for who He is: Creator, Redeemer, the Shepherd, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The Psalms in scripture are a helpful guide for this.

3. Listen

Start by asking the Lord to speak to you and give Him time to respond. You may be able to hear him in the silence. It can also be helpful to reflect on scripture or another resource.

- If you aren't presently using a plan for reading the Scriptures, you may want to consider reading the Mass readings of the day. They can be easily accessed here: readings.livingwithchrist.ca.
- You might also consider reading through the Gospel of Mark, which is a summary of the life of Jesus, and the letter of St. James, which outlines the lifestyle of the Christian.
- There is a treasury of holy books written by saints that can also be helpful in your prayer.

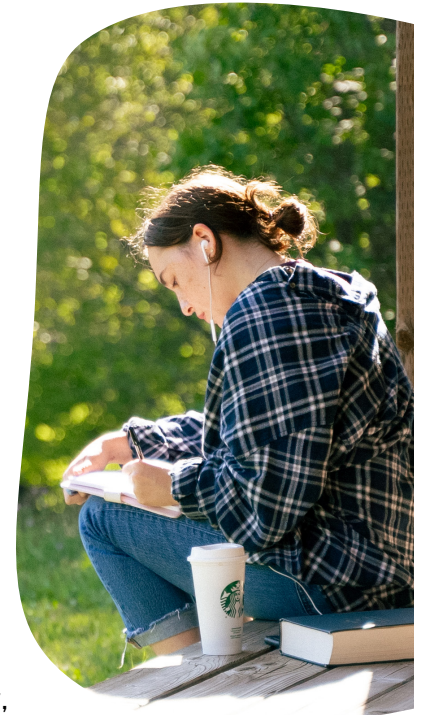
After you read, ponder God's word. Ask yourself, "What is God saying to me through this?" Consider how you're being invited to respond to what you have reflected on. Speak to the Lord about what is happening within you, comfortable or not. Don't be afraid to wrestle with God. Let it be the real you, encountering the real Him. You may want to journal your conversation, thoughts, and resolutions.

4. Intercessions

We usually think of intercessions as praying for our needs and the needs of our family and friends. This is an important part of intercessions. However, don't forget to pray for your own spiritual life. As part of your intercession time, sit quietly and ask the Lord to open your heart to receive more of Him, His love, and His mercy. Ask Him to forgive you for your sins and the other ways you have turned away from him. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to live the life to which you have been called. You may want to pray this prayer daily:

"COME HOLY SPIRIT, AND FILL THE HEARTS OF YOUR FAITHFUL. ENKINDLE IN US THE FIRE OF YOUR DIVINE LOVE. SEND FORTH YOUR SPIRIT, AND WE SHALL BE RECREATED, AND YOU WILL RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH."

Remember, the ultimate model for our prayer is Jesus Christ, and the Our Father prayer He taught us. In that prayer, Jesus teaches us to recognize that God is God, to worship Him, to surrender to His will, to ask for our needs while relying on his divine providence, to receive his mercy, extend that mercy to others and ask for His help in our daily battles. Do your best to live out these principles in your prayer and God will draw you deeper into the abundant life.



"Without prayer, we have neither light nor strength to advance in the way which leads to God."

- St. Alphonsus De Liguori

Sacraments

“THE SACRAMENTS ARE EFFICACIOUS SIGNS OF GRACE, INSTITUTED BY CHRIST AND ENTRUSTED TO THE CHURCH, BY WHICH DIVINE LIFE IS DISPENSED TO US...” (CCC 1131)



The sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation have been given to us by the church to give us greater union with God. Consider adding daily masses to your weekly routine on top of your Sunday obligation. Ask yourself if you are going to Confession as often as needed. Seek out opportunities to visit our Lord in Eucharistic Adoration.

The grace offered to us in the sacraments is vital to the life of every Catholic. However, our state can affect how we are transformed by the grace we receive. *“The Holy Spirit prepares the faithful for the sacraments by the Word of God and the faith which welcomes that word in well-disposed hearts. Thus the sacraments strengthen faith and express it”* (CCC 1133). It’s important not to treat the sacraments like tasks or magic pills. Instead, they are beautiful and essential elements of your relationship with God. How you approach them will affect what you receive from them.

Action

Ephesians 4: 1 says, “Live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” How we live our life tells the people around us what we believe is important. If someone were to watch me for a week, what would they learn about me? What would they see as important to me? Would they be able to tell that my Faith is important to me? That I am Catholic? Is my life a good witness of the Gospel message? Am I living what I say I believe? Reflecting on questions like these and acting upon what you learn from your reflections is good preparation for the mission.

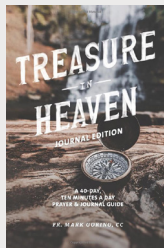
“So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.”

James 2: 17 RSVCE

Spiritual Formation Recommendations

People sometimes ask us for resource recommendations. Here are some that we have found to be helpful:

ESTABLISHING A PRAYER ROUTINE



TREASURE IN HEAVEN
Fr. Mark Goring
Free PDF copy

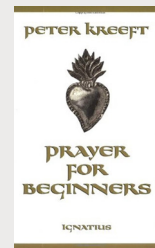


THE BETTER PART
Fr. John Bartunek

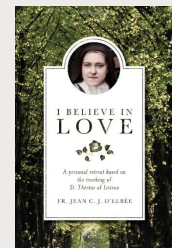


THE BIBLE IN A YEAR PODCAST
Fr. Mike Schmitz

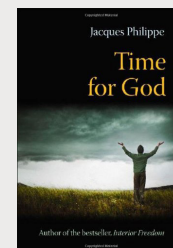
DEEPENING YOUR PRAYER



PRAYER FOR BEGINNERS
Dr. Peter Kreeft

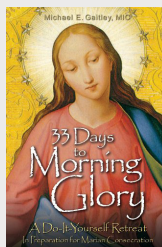


I BELIEVE IN LOVE
Fr. Jean C. J. d'Elbée



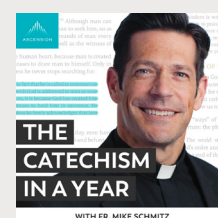
TIME FOR GOD
Fr. Jacques Philippe

RELATIONSHIP WITH MARY



33 DAYS TO MORNING GLORY
Fr. Michael Gaitley

CATECHESIS



THE CATECHISM IN A YEAR PODCAST
Fr. Mike Schmitz

Ministry Skills Preparation

Awareness of Basic Christian and Catholic Apologetics

Watch some videos or read up on some basic Church apologetics: (ie, why is there suffering?) Some good places to start could be:

- [Godsplaining Podcast](#)
- [Fr. Mike Schmitz Podcast by Ascension Presents](#)
- [Catholic Answers](#)
- [Beginning Apologetics books by San Juan Seminars](#)

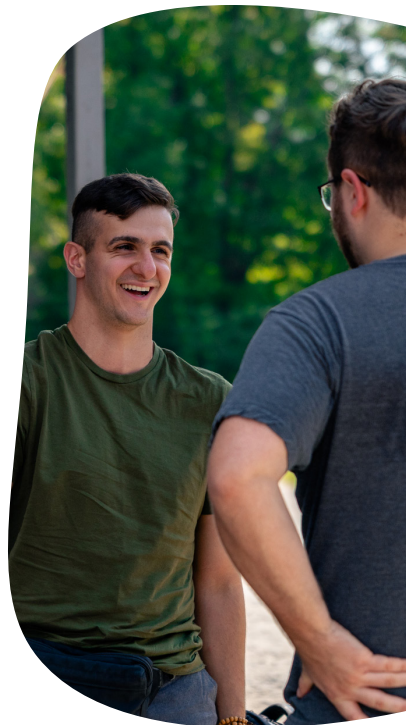
Meeting People

Practice meeting new people and making conversation (linger after Mass, make eye contact, smile). Push yourself out of your comfort zone.

Greater Service of Neighbour

Expanding your capacity for service and sacrifice by paying attention to and acting on the opportunities around you: return a shopping cart for a stranger, do the dishes at home without being asked, etc.

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” - John 13:35



“For this reason, side by side with the collective proclamation of the Gospel, the other form of transmission, the person-to-person one, remains valid and important...In the long run, is there any other way of handing on the Gospel than by transmitting to another person one’s personal experience of faith? It must not happen that the pressing need to proclaim the Good News to the multitudes should cause us to forget this form of proclamation whereby an individual’s personal conscience is reached and touched by an entirely unique word that he receives from someone else.”

- Pope Paul IV - Evangelii Nuntiandi 46

Creating & Practicing One's Personal Testimony

Personal testimony is so important in evangelization because it is your lived experience. You can give teaching, scripture, or opinion, but often hearts still remain hardened. It is powerful when we share from a place of what God has personally done in our lives.

To share a personal testimony is to share your own story of what God has done for you and then invite people to join you in that story.

What is a testimony? A NET testimony is a three-minute account of a specific and concrete way the Lord has worked in your life. It is a story of your experiences and mostly avoids intellectual concepts.

Some questions to ask yourself to help you prepare your testimony

- What are some ways you have experienced God in your life?
- In what areas have you seen a change in your life because of your faith/relationship with the Lord?
- When did you ever ask God for Help, and how did He respond?
- What have you learned in your life that young people can relate to? What part did the Lord play in what you learned?

Typically, testimonies can be divided into three parts:

Part 1: (1.5 minutes) A picture of the situation before your Conversion (*turning*) point.

- Start with a powerful opening statement.
- Give concise details of the area in the past. Be careful—too many details distract. Refrain from glorifying sin by focusing on it more than is necessary.
- Don't condemn or blame anyone else; we don't want to model excuses or rationalization: "I'm this way because of what someone else did to me." Admit your own mistakes.
- It's good to establish an example you can come back to in the third part of your testimony.
- Guard against trying to convey too many different ways God worked, so that no main point is ever made.

Part 2 : (1 minute) Conversion (*grace/decision*) point. .

- Choose and focus on only one specific moment where God moved.
- People want/need to know how to surrender to Jesus. Ask Yourself:
- What circumstance caused you to turn to God?
- What did people say/do that caused you to turn to God?
- What was the central issue of why you said “yes” or surrendered to the Lord - “I tried everything else - what did I have to lose?”
- What did you say? What did you do?
- What did you experience the Lord doing? Saying?

Part 3 : (30 seconds) A picture of your life now.

- Maintain a balance between the following two truths:
 - Once God touches you, you are not the same, and your life improves
 - Even though God has worked in your life, you are not perfect, nor is your life perfect. Show how you are different, without masking what remains the same.
- Be careful not to portray a before/after effect - something that would suggest: “I had a problem, I met Jesus, and now everything is perfect.”
- Use phrases that help to process the idea and maintain this balance:
 - “That day **began** something for me...”
 - “That was the **first step** for me...”
 - “I was not the same after that day. I **began** to...”
 - Give concrete differences in your life.
- You could refer back to the example you used in the first part of the testimony.
- End with a strong conclusion: Give a short summary (e.g. “God showed me how to forgive”) and express an invitation (“He can do the same for you”).

General Instructions:

- Understand the difference between a talk & a testimony. Generally, testimonies share; talks teach. Avoid saying “What I’m going to talk about is...” **A testimony is sharing your own story of what God has done for you clearly and concisely, and then inviting people to join you in that story through a concrete action.**
- Avoid the temptation to share more and more of your “wisdom”. Review your testimony to ensure it won’t come across as condemning or preachy. The focus is on sharing our experience and inviting those in the audience to a clear and concrete action.
- Tell the truth. Don’t manipulate facts or embellish/exaggerate stories to make them more “exciting.”
- Use discretion, especially for sensitive testimonies (concerning sexuality or other grave sins). Avoid explicit reference to suicide or self-harm. Don’t use the word “depressed” if you weren’t clinically diagnosed.
- Guard against “lingo” that might feel meaningful to you, but might be confusing to someone who has never heard it before (“praise God”, “saved”, “take my identity in...”).



Now, take some time to put together your testimony. Spend some time in prayer asking God to show you that moment when you fully gave your life to him. And then start writing some things down.